

Darlington Proposed Submission Local Plan (2016 – 36)

Spatial Distribution of Development Topic Paper

February 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this topic paper is to describe and justify the spatial distribution of development within the Proposed Submission Local Plan. A brief summary is provided to explain how the development requirements for new housing and employment development have been derived. Background information and detail are provided, outlining how the approach to distributing the identified development needs has been established. Key factors and related issues that have underpinned the locational strategy include the settlement hierarchy, economic factors, transport and infrastructure, physical and environmental constraints, site selection process and development limits methodology, all of which will be discussed in turn.

2. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 2.1 The current planning approach to distributing housing and employment growth across the borough is set out within the existing development plan for Darlington, largely the Core Strategy DPD (adopted April 2011). The policies contained in this document were required to be in conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East, which at that time also formed part of the development plan. The RSS established the scale of housing and employment growth to be planned for in each local authority area and set guidelines for the way in which growth was to be distributed at the local level.
- 2.2 The spatial strategy for delivering the levels of growth identified in the RSS was to focus new development and regeneration activity within the main urban area. Priority was given to three strategic areas; the town centre, Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe. New housing and employment development was also proposed in the rest of the urban area, the North West Urban Fringe and the Eastern Urban Fringe. Development in the strategic location of Durham Tees Valley Airport (now Teesside International Airport) area was identified for airport related employment uses throughout the plan period.
- 2.3 Further policy guidance is provided in the Core Strategy which covers the circumstance where housing supply falls below a certain level. In this situation windfall housing development would be permitted in appropriate locations in the urban fringe and within and adjacent to the larger villages.
- 2.4 The locational approach of the Core Strategy was also contained within the Local Plan (1997), some policies of which are saved and make up the current development plan. The plan set out that given the compact nature of the Borough, most social and economic needs can be provided for within the urban area. This is the most appropriate location for most housing, business and retail development, with limited development opportunities within the villages.

3. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategies were abolished via the Localism Act 2011. The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 represented a significant reform of the planning system aimed at refocussing planning policy on encouraging growth. The NPPF has been updated in July 2018 and February 2019 and retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development for both plan making and decision taking.
- 3.2 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF requires that local plans should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make 'sufficient provision' for housing, employment and other development in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 59 emphasises the importance of ensuring that a sufficient amount of land can come forward to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, while paragraph

80 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic development. Planning policies are required to set out a clear economic vision and strategy which 'positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth' (paragraph 81).

- 3.3 Further to this, local planning authorities, in preparing their local plans, are required to meet the full, objectively assessed needs for development in their areas. Where local plans fail to do this, the NPPF indicates that relevant policies are considered to be out of date and in need of urgent review.

4. DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- 4.1 Before discussing the spatial strategy of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, it is integral to understand the scale of housing and employment growth that should be accommodated over the plan period to 2036.

EMPLOYMENT LAND REQUIREMENTS

- 4.2 Darlington Borough's economy has performed strongly over recent years shifting from its past reliance on manufacturing to one with a wider, more resilient base. Specialist engineering, the (now dominant) service sector (business and professional services) and public-sector employment (public administration, healthcare and education) are the most significant employers, whilst a relatively high proportion of the local workforce (36.4%) are in professional, senior or managerial roles, or professional and technically skilled occupations (NOMIS 2016). The Borough has a projected 'increasing potential' workforce, with relatively high skills and higher education achievements, and has economic activity and overall employment rates consistently above sub-regional and regional levels.
- 4.3 The Employment Land Reviews (2012 and 2017) identified that the Local Plan should plan for up to 172 hectares (ha) of land allocations for employment land across the Borough in the period up to 2036. The Proposed Submission Local Plan meets the need identified in the study; current land available plus the allocations provides gross available employment land in the Borough of 226 ha. That translates to a net available plot portfolio of 158 ha developable for employment use for the Local Plan Period 2016-36.

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

- 4.4 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was undertaken in 2017 to consider the overall quantitative housing need for Darlington. The assessment sets out detailed evidence to justify a housing requirement higher than the Government's standard method figure for Darlington (162 dwellings per annum).
- 4.5 The study identifies flaws in national statistics which underpin the standard method. Essentially the 2014 based household projections are underestimating growth for Darlington. Modelling work in the SHMA was undertaken to derive a more reliable and appropriate demographic projection. The chosen scenario utilised recent local administrative data and long term migration trends.
- 4.6 An objectively assessed need of 389 dwellings per annum was identified taking into account demographic growth and concealed and homeless households and vacant and second homes. It also sets out that an additional 33 dwellings per annum should be considered to address the need for bed spaces in residential institutions. Given the jobs growth target of the plan period of 7,034 a further increase in the housing requirement was suggested of 70 dwellings per annum to meet the needs of additional workers to fill these jobs. In total this results in a housing need of 492 dwellings per annum and 9,840 dwellings over the plan period.

- 4.7 The Council utilised the evidence in the SHMA 2017 to form the policy approach, a housing requirement range. The lower minimum housing requirement takes account of the baseline need for the plan period, whilst the housing target also accounts for jobs growth aspirations. The baseline need results in 422 net additional dwellings per annum and the housing target 492 net additional dwellings per annum.
- 4.8 The Proposed Submission Local Plan therefore sets out a housing requirement target of 9,840 dwellings over the plan period.

5. KEY FACTORS IN ESTABLISHING THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The creation of sustainable communities is one of the most important objectives of national planning policy. There are a number of key principles within the NPPF which have helped to guide the spatial distribution of development within the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- 5.2 Paragraph 72 emphasises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. This relates closely to para 103 which requires that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth by focussing significant development in locations that are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 5.3 In order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, the NPPF (paragraph 78) states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, with planning policies identifying opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Whilst acknowledging that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby, the NPPF provides that isolated development in the countryside is to be generally avoided (paragraph 79).
- 5.4 With regards to employment land, paragraph 82 outlines that planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different economic sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.
- 5.5 An overarching principle of the framework is that policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment. It goes on to state that strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed land.

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

- 5.6 A key component in developing the spatial approach to the distribution of growth across the borough is the concept of a sustainable hierarchy of settlements. This categorises the borough's settlements related to their level of 'sustainability' based on service provision. The hierarchy of settlements within the borough is relatively straight forward given the geographical context; a compact main urban area surrounded by a number of villages, some of which are larger than others. The Local Plan (1997) identified the main urban area as the focus of development and development

limits were applied to a number of the villages, outlining that limited growth within these limits would be permitted.

- 5.7 The Core Strategy (2011) carried forward the approach of the Local Plan (1997). The document outlined that none of the villages have significant development opportunities on previously developed land and so have not been identified as strategic locations for new development. However, the larger villages of Hurworth/Hurworth Place, Middleton St. George and Heighington should be the focus for the provision of services, employment and facilities to sustain the rural community.
- 5.8 The Core Strategy (2011) and Local Plan (1997) did not set out a formal settlement hierarchy policy, however this was quite clear given the borough's geography and the locational strategy for new development in these documents. The approach taken was to focus development within the main urban area with limited growth in the villages. This has been carried forward into the new Local Plan, although with some changes which are set out below. The settlement hierarchy within policy SH 1 is as follows:
- Darlington Urban Area
 - Service Villages (Heighington, Hurworth, and Middleton St George)
 - Rural Villages (Bishopton, Brafferton, High Coniscliffe, Low Coniscliffe, Merrybent, Neasham, Piercebridge, Sadberge)
- 5.9 The Core Strategy referred to Hurworth, Middleton St. George and Heighington as larger villages. No substantial development was proposed in these locations. The Proposed Submission Local Plan creates a tier for these settlements and names them 'Service Villages'. These villages have been the focus of increased development over recent years, particularly during the period when the Council could not demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land.
- 5.10 The Council considers these villages to be sustainable locations for new development, particularly housing, given the level of services provision now within them. An audit was carried out of all the borough's villages in 2019 to establish levels of services and facilities (see appendix 1). This evidence was utilised to inform and support the approach of the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development. It was recognised early on in the preparation of the Local Plan that these villages could assist with housing delivery in the short and medium term. This would also accord with paragraph 78 of the NPPF in terms of promoting sustainable development in rural areas, locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and identifying opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this supports local services.
- 5.11 In preparing the new Local Plan the decision was made to remove development limits from a number of smaller rural villages and hamlets. Limits have been removed from Killerby, Summerhouse, Denton, Little Stainton, Great Stainton and Redworth. This was to better reflect that some of these small settlements had no or very little service provision as evidenced in the village audit. These villages would be treated as being part of the countryside.
- 5.12 Overall, the longevity of the established hierarchy is evidence that it provides a robust, appropriate spatial approach to the location of development helping to meet the needs of local communities in the most accessible and sustainable locations. The responses to the Issues and Scoping Stage of the plan also supported this approach (see section 7).

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- 5.13 The interrelationship between employment and housing growth means that the locational aspects of economic policy have a key influence on the spatial strategy for the plan area. Of particular significance in this respect are the following policy documents.
- 5.14 The Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) 2016 – 26 prepared by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) sets out the growth ambitions and priorities for the Tees Valley over the next ten years. The SEP highlights the needs and ambitions of those sectors which are not just a priority for Tees Valley but are strategically important to the UK economy. Key strategic priorities in the plan which are important to Darlington and will influence the location of economic growth are:
- Implementation of the Darlington High Speed 2 Growth Hub, which encompasses new platforms at Darlington rail station as part of a commercial redevelopment, delivering a 21st century rail gateway ready for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail; and
 - Improved east-west road connectivity to provide a high quality, resilient corridor along the A66 from the A1(M) to the international gateway at Teesport.
- 5.15 These priorities are major investment schemes in transport infrastructure which will assist with the Council's locational strategy in the Local Plan. They are also reflected in the draft version of the Tees Valley Local Industrial Strategy (2019).
- 5.16 The Economic Strategy for Darlington 2012 – 26 focuses on the issues and actions that businesses have said are important to the development of Darlington's local economy through to 2026. The overall vision for the strategy talks about supporting businesses by offering a range of town centre and edge of town office and industrial sites to meet the needs of indigenous firms and inward investors. It also mentions key sites at Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe which have been partly developed and continue to grow through innovative partnerships between developers, infrastructure providers and the Council. The strategy has been considered in the preparation of the Local Plan and spatial elements closely align with the distribution of development.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 5.17 The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and Sustainable Community Strategy both acknowledge that the existing capacity of the road network is a major issue for the Borough in delivering growth over the plan period. Some locations already experience traffic congestion during peak periods and this is likely to increase if no interventions are made. By focusing new development in parts of the Borough which have good access to existing or planned public transport provision, the spatial strategy of the Local Plan is designed to keep the impact of new development on the transport network to a minimum, but some supporting highway improvements will still be needed to enable regeneration plans to be delivered.
- 5.18 In order to minimise traffic generation in the first instance the site selection process has been weighted to encourage allocations to be near existing public and sustainable transport networks. Further detail on how this has been achieved is contained in the Transport Topic Paper.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

- 5.19 The spatial strategy for the plan area must take into consideration the capacity of other forms of infrastructure to accommodate future growth and, in doing so, have regard to the plans and strategies of relevant agencies and organisations. In considering the overall spatial distribution of growth it is necessary to ensure that development in particular locations can be supported by the

timely provision of necessary infrastructure including health care provision, school places, water supply, surface water and foul drainage and gas and electricity supply. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan considers the wide range of infrastructure requirements that arise for the Local Plan and identifies infrastructure projects that fulfil these needs.

PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

5.20 In Darlington, physical and environmental constraints exert influence on the spatial distribution of housing and employment growth. These features present challenges when selecting the options for achieving sustainable development. The constraints are set out below:

- The river Tees in the southern part of the borough and land susceptible to flooding;
- The A1(M) to the west of the main urban area creates a physical barrier;
- The A66 to the south and east of the main urban area creates a physical barrier; and
- The compact nature of the local authority area.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.21 Although the settlement hierarchy described above provides a framework for distributing development growth, there are a number of other 'wider sustainability' factors that have been taken into account in determining the location of development. These include the need to:

- Support existing services and facilities within settlements;
- Ensure that new housing growth is reasonably related to employment opportunities;
- Provide local housing choice including the provision of affordable housing;
- Consider the relationship of a settlement to public transport services and to other settlements in the hierarchy (particularly in terms of access to services); and
- In relation to the allocation of land for development, the deliverability of sites.

6. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

6.1 The Local Plan has been informed throughout its preparation by a sustainability appraisal. Its overall roll is to promote sustainable development and demonstrates how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives. Reasonable alternatives are also assessed in terms of spatial strategy, allocations and policies. Significant adverse impacts on the objectives should be avoided, however where they are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed. The process effectively brings together many of the factors discussed in this paper and is itself a significant influence on the development of the spatial strategy.

6.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework was published in September 2017 and set out the framework for undertaking the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA / SEA) for the Darlington Local Plan. This was the first stage of the process. It explained the context, identified the sustainability objectives, and the approach to assessment. It also outlined relevant environmental, economic and social issues. The report acknowledges that central to this process is the development of an Appraisal Framework that provides the template for describing, analysing and comparing the sustainability implications of the Local Plan.

6.3 A key component of the appraisal framework is the development of a set of sustainability objectives, informed by the review of baseline data and existing plans and strategies that are then used to appraise the proposed spatial distribution options and potential development sites in terms of their contribution to sustainable development.

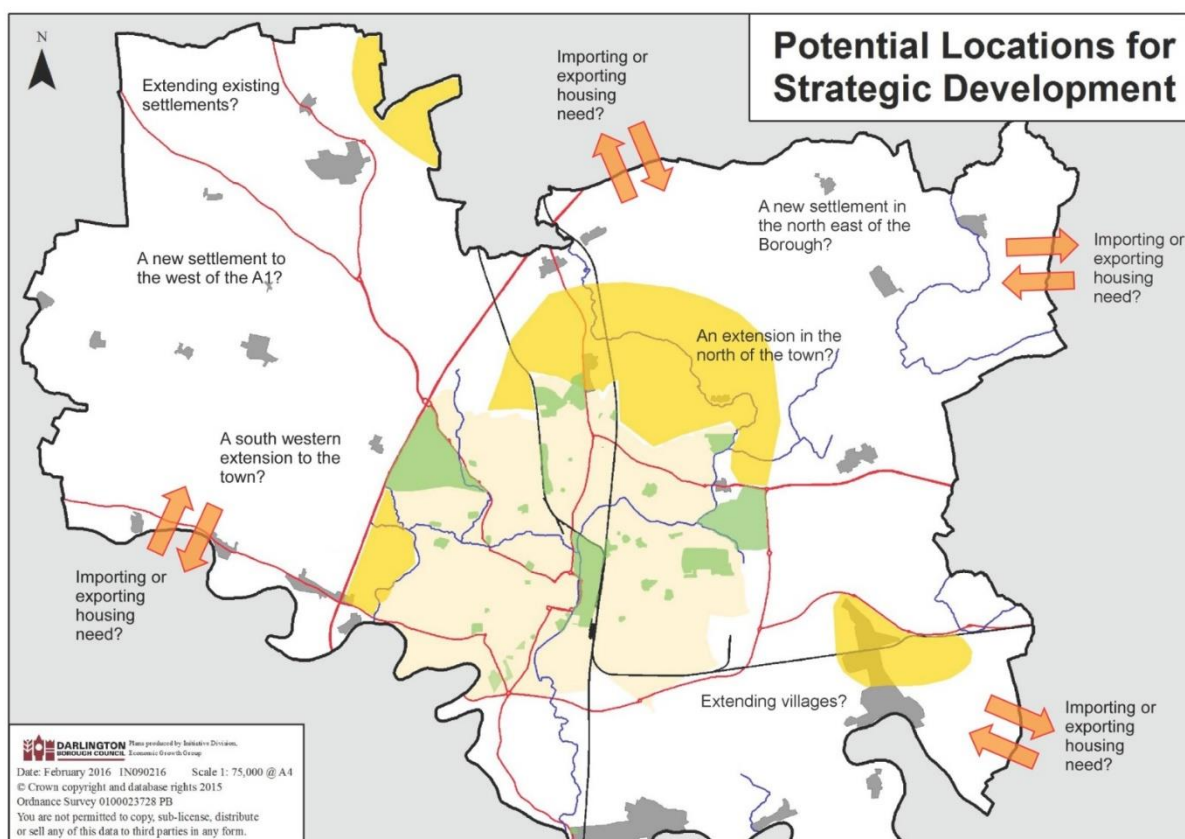
The findings of the sustainability appraisal of the options for scale and distribution of growth are discussed below.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL PLAN SPATIAL STRATEGY

ISSUES AND SCOPING CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Council published an Issues and Scoping Paper for the new Local Plan for consultation in May 2016 along with issuing a 'Call for Sites' at the same time. The consultation document set out the Council's initial ideas for the new Local Plan, including identifying a number of potential locations for strategic development around the Borough, as illustrated in Figure 1 below taken from the Issue and Scoping Paper. The strategic options were developed through initial consideration of opportunities and constraints within the Borough. This was carried out through cross-departmental internal workshops, with input from the Planning Advisory Service and the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England) Advisory Team for Large Applications. The areas were identified as having the potential to accommodate residential development on a strategic scale.

Figure 1: Issues and Scoping – Initial Strategic Options.



- 7.2 In November 2016 the Council took a report to Cabinet reporting the outcomes of the Issues and Scoping consultation (Available on the Local Plan microsite <https://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/plan-development/issues-and-scoping-stage/>). The report includes a summary and review of the comments submitted as part of the consultation on the potential locations. The Issues and Scoping document was not subject to a formal sustainability appraisal, however a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and subsequently Sustainability Appraisal Framework were prepared setting out what the Council intended to include in the SA and how it would be used (mentioned earlier in this paper).

- 7.3 In order to plan effectively, determine which areas and sites will best achieve Darlington's Local Plan Vision, Aims and Objectives, and deliver good planning outcomes, potential areas for strategic scale development were then assessed against a number of criteria to determine whether they would be taken forward into the next stage of the Local Plan process. The criteria used to assess the locations were based on draft Local Plan Vision, Aims and Objectives and the issues and objectives identified in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.
- 7.4 The assessment of the strategic options in the Issues and Scoping consultation, and sites submitted during the consultation was set out in a paper titled Strategic Development Selection (annex 4 of the above Cabinet Report). The paper is attached in appendix 2 and provides further detail on the consideration of strategic options. The list below confirms the broad locations assessed and states whether they were proposed to be taken forward.

Development Locations:

- (a) A new settlement west of A1 - Do not include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (b) South West Darlington - Include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (c) South Darlington – Do not include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (d) North West Darlington – Include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (e) North Darlington - Include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (f) North East Darlington - Include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (g) Middleton St George Village – Do not include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
 - (h) South of Newton Aycliffe – Do not include in Stage 2 as Strategic Development Location.
- 7.5 It is important to note that where areas were not selected as strategic locations for the next stage of the local plan process, this did not mean that individual sites were not considered further. These sites were assessed as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and SA or through the planning application process. For example, Middleton St George was not considered as an area for comprehensive master planning to facilitate significant housing delivery at this stage. However, there were a number of sites within the village that were considered to be suitable and sustainable locations for housing development. It is also important to note that circumstances changed around the five year housing land supply position, prior to the standard methodology a deliverable supply could not be demonstrated, and the village was the main interest of the development industry. Sites were assessed on their own merits through the planning application process.
- 7.6 As part of the Call for Sites process some 120 sites, totalling over 3,000 hectares of land, were submitted to the Council for consideration in the Local Plan by landowners, developers and other interested parties. The vast majority of sites consist of greenfield land on the edge of settlements with sites ranging in size from those less than 0.05 hectares to one site over 1,000 hectares.
- 7.7 Darlington's HELAA, published in March 2018, is a technical study that determines the suitability, availability and achievability of potential development sites across the Borough. All sites considered as part of the previous Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process undertaken in 2015 and the Employment Land Review in 2012 were retained and assessed as part of the HELAA, along with any 'new' sites submitted to the Council regardless of the use proposed as part of the call for sites process. Sites only progressed to the SA if they performed well in the HELAA.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

7.8 As a result of the Issues and Scoping consultation in 2016, the response to the Call for Sites and the HELAA process, twelve broad strategic development options presented themselves to be considered by the Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging Local Plan. No single option was sufficient to deliver the level of growth required to meet the Borough's full housing and employment land requirements for the period to 2036. Therefore, the final development strategy needed to be made up of an appropriate combination of the options available to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth for the plan period.

7.9 Three options were considered but were discounted due to a lack of suitable and/or available sites based on a consideration of the sites submitted to the Council through the 'call for sites' process and a desk top survey. These options are listed below:

- Newton Aycliffe
- Extend existing smaller villages
- A new settlement in the north east of the Borough

Newton Aycliffe

7.10 The Council's Issues and Scoping document identified development on the south west side of Newton Aycliffe as a potential strategic development option to be explored as part of the Local Plans development. Darlington Borough Council's boundary wraps closely around the south and west side of Newton Aycliffe which is located to the north west of the A1(M), north of Darlington town.

7.11 This option would have to be brought forward with the cooperation and agreement of Durham County Council in their role as the Local Planning Authority covering Newton Aycliffe. In order for development in this location to be suitable and sustainable it would need to act as an extension of Newton Aycliffe itself, requiring land either side of the local authorities boundary to make this happen. Very limited land has been put forward to the Council in this location as part of the call for sites process that would warrant exploring this option further as a strategic development option.

Extend existing smaller villages

7.12 Whilst this option is likely to be included as part of the overall development strategy for the emerging Local Plan, the level of development expected to take place around existing villages in the Borough will be smaller scale, appropriate to the character, role and function of each settlement and not strategic in nature.

A new settlement in the north east of the Borough

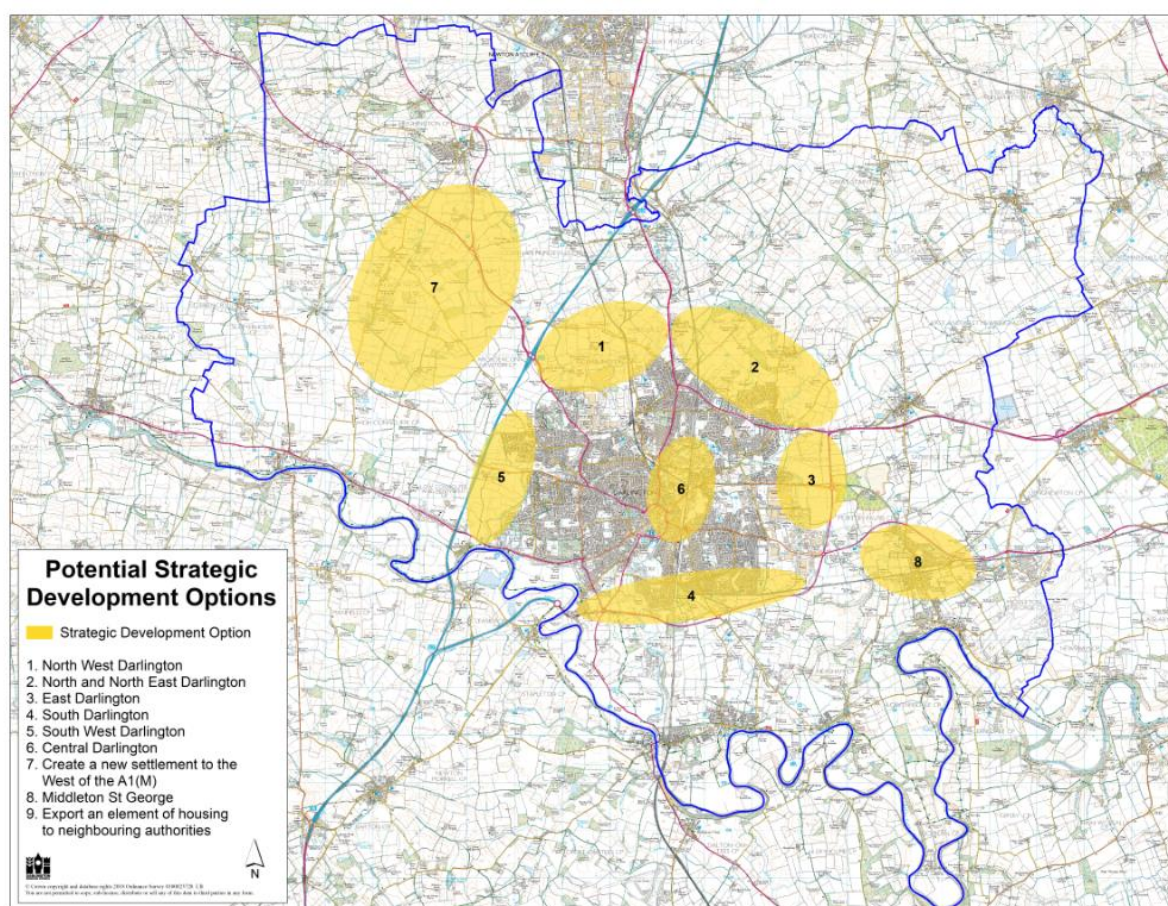
7.13 This option was identified as a potential location for strategic development in the Issues and Scoping Paper. However, no suitable sites have been submitted through the Call for Sites process that would enable this option to be considered a viable alternative or through a desk top survey of potential locations.

7.14 The nine potential strategic development options considered in the Sustainability Appraisal were (Figure 2 below):

1. North West Darlington
2. North and North East Darlington
3. East Darlington

4. South Darlington
5. South West Darlington
6. Central Darlington
7. Create a new settlement to the West of the A1(M)
8. Middleton St George
9. Export an element of housing to neighbouring authorities

Figure 2: Sustainability Appraisal Strategic Development Options



The Sustainability Appraisal included a summary of the results and a commentary on the potential impacts of the strategic development options which is set out below.

SA summary

- 7.15 Overall it was considered that potential strategic development options 1-6 (relating to development within and around Darlington town) and 8 (growth in the village of Middleton St George) would have broadly positive implications for the borough in meeting housing needs in existing settlements with a good range of services, facilities and employment opportunities, strong established communities and with generally better access to more sustainable transport options. In all options it will be

important to manage the potential negative effects of development through the appropriate location, design, and mitigation of development pressures as required by specific sites.

- 7.16 Strategic development options 7 and 9, relating to the potential creation of a new settlement to the West of the A1(M) and the option to seek to export an element of housing to neighbouring authorities respectively, are considered to be more likely have negative implications for the borough.
- 7.17 Creating a new settlement to the West of the A1(M) would not address the short term housing needs of the borough and would not deliver sufficient development over the plan period to meet the land use requirements of the emerging plan. In order to create a sustainable settlement that reduces the need for people to travel to other centres to meet their day to day needs it would have to be of a sufficient size to support a range of services and facilities, including employment opportunities, education and health provision. Development of this scale in this location would be likely to result in significant negative effects on the distinctive rural landscape of the west side of the borough and on nationally and locally designated heritage assets in the vicinity. It is also unclear what effect a new settlement would have on existing villages in the area. Facilities and services provided in a larger new settlement in this location may make reduce the viability of existing similar facilities in nearby villages, with potential knock on effects on community cohesion and the sustainability of settlements.
- 7.18 There is little justification for the Council exploring exporting an element of its housing requirement to neighbouring authority areas. This would not address local needs for housing, increasing the pressure on the existing housing stock in the borough, and would simply push the potential positive and negative effects of development onto neighbouring authority areas. As set out in the November Cabinet report, under the Duty to Co-operate, it was necessary to consider the option of importing or exporting housing need from or to adjacent housing market areas. However, the consensus among neighbouring local authorities is that there are no reasons to do this and that the Local Plan should plan to accommodate the boroughs needs only.

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

- 7.19 Having considered the responses to the Issues and Scoping document, public consultation on a Draft Local Plan took place from the 21st June until 2nd August 2018. This sought views on the preferred approach for the spatial vision and set out draft policies and proposed allocations, rather than a Preferred Options style document.
- 7.20 The distribution of housing and employment growth in the plan followed the settlement hierarchy outlined earlier in this paper. This ensured that development would be located in the most accessible and sustainable locations to meet the needs of local communities. Out of the nine potential strategic development options considered in the Sustainability Appraisal process a combination of these approaches was utilised to deliver the employment land and housing requirements (options 1 – 6 and 8). A combination was required as not one of the options alone could deliver the requirements. Further explanation and detail is provided below with regards to the planned housing and employment growth.

HOUSING

- 7.21 The Council adopted a balanced strategy to meeting its housing requirement. Housing allocations were proposed which were considered to be the most suitable and sustainable for development

over the plan period. A mix of sites were put forward in terms of size. Furthermore, they were appropriately spread across urban extensions, the urban area and the Borough's service villages.

- 7.22 The locational strategy for the proposed allocations was focused within the main urban area, as urban extensions and at the larger service villages. Historically the Borough has grown from the main urban area outwards. Brownfield sites within the main urban area cannot be solely relied upon to meet the housing needs, due to constraints on delivery and these sites alone would not meet quantitative housing needs. Consequently, urban extensions are the next most logical approach to delivering new homes. These sites are adjacent to existing services and transport routes and provide opportunities to deliver new infrastructure and facilities.
- 7.23 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF recognises that the supply of a large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for larger scale development such as through significant extensions to existing towns, provided that they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. This is the Council's intention for the Skertingham Strategic Allocation which has been selected following the consideration of a number of potential strategic growth options as part of the Issues and Scoping consultation and subsequently the Sustainability Appraisal process. The North/North East of Darlington is considered to be a suitable, sustainable and deliverable location for a significant extension of the town.
- 7.24 A number of sites are also proposed in the service villages as these settlements already have a number of facilities/services and good sustainable transport links, therefore they are considered sustainable locations for housing development. Sites in these locations would assist with housing delivery in the short and medium term as they do not require large scale infrastructure. Development is restricted in rural villages due to the very limited level of services and facilities available and other small villages, hamlets and other groups of buildings are treated as part of the countryside.
- 7.25 Site selection was informed by detailed site assessments within the HELAA and SA. In addition to the outcomes of these assessments housing allocations were also selected through the use of further criteria including:
- Directing development to within the urban area, as urban extensions and to the service villages, in accordance with the locational strategy;
 - Selecting sites in sustainable locations with good access to public transport, services, shops, employment locations and community facilities;
 - Including brownfield sites where possible, taking into account site constraints and economic viability;
 - Avoiding areas which have significant physical constraints and avoiding environmentally sensitive locations;
- 7.26 Distribution of sites across the main urban area and service villages was not set by specific percentage requirements, due to the compact nature of the borough and reasonably straight forward settlement hierarchy. The approach was simply to allocate the most suitable and sustainable sites for development. This did result in a greater proportion of housing growth at Middleton St George, as sites put forward for allocation at Hurworth and Heighington did have more constraints. The existing settlement layout of Middleton St George also meant there were more logical options for expansion. The amount of development planned for this service village was not considered to be inappropriate and the settlement had the existing service provision to support this growth.

- 7.27 The Draft Local Plan received a substantial amount of objection on the basis that more brownfield sites should be allocated and greenfield sites should not be developed for housing. There were a number of brownfield sites proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan and the Council is supportive of development on brownfield land. Some of the brownfield allocation sites have now received planning permission and have therefore been moved to the housing commitments list.
- 7.28 The Local Plan does have to be deliverable and if there are doubts that a site will come forward over the plan period it should not be included or relied upon in the plan to meet housing needs. Brownfield sites can be more difficult and costly to develop as such their deliverability is sometimes questionable. Local Plan's which have relied on these sites in the past have failed as the sites have not come forward for development. As such there was not an over reliance on these sites in the Draft Local Plan and for these reasons the town centre fringe regeneration area has not been included in the proposed housing allocations. This is not to say that the Council would not be supportive of this area coming forward for development or any other brownfield site providing it is a suitable location for housing development.
- 7.29 The above approach does inevitably result in the loss of largely agricultural land adjacent to the main urban area and service villages, however sites have been selected wherever possible that will minimise the impact on surrounding rural areas. The Council has sought to avoid areas of highest landscape, environmental and agricultural value. The NPPF does promote the effective use of land and the prioritisation of brownfield land. Development in the countryside on the edge of settlements is not however contrary to the NPPF provided that the strategy and sites selected by the Local Plan can be demonstrated to be in line with the overall purpose of the planning system, that is, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Local Plan should also be read as a whole and there are other policies in the plan which will prevent urban sprawl and protect the open countryside.

EMPLOYMENT

- 7.30 The Council considers that the emerging Local Plan provides a continuous and diverse supply of employment land to meet the needs of existing and future economic development. The employment allocations in the Draft Local Plan followed the same locational strategy and settlement hierarchy as the housing allocations. Sites are largely focused within and adjacent to the main urban area with only a small number of allocations in more remote areas which have alternative justification for their locations. The site selection process was again informed by the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and also the Employment Land Review 2017 including the 2019 update.
- 7.31 Since the adoption of the Local Plan 1997 employment development has been at a slower pace compared to housing growth. This has been due to economic factors and general oversupply of employment land in the North East of England and the Tees Valley. Employment Land Review updates or equivalent have shown that the demand has been met by the available site portfolio of the previous development plan. In fact, allocated reserve employment land such as Faverdale Reserve has not been utilised.
- 7.32 Despite the above historical background on employment land Darlington has had substantial economic growth over recent years. The local economy has many advantages including a diverse range of businesses trading in a range of sectors. The borough was the 7th fastest growing economy in the UK of 238 local authority areas in 2015 based on GVA. Development schemes which have taken place more recently include office development within the town centre at Feethams House

and construction of a major distribution centre at Lingfield Point (Amazon). Over the last ten years other major projects include logistics development at Faverdale, Department for Education relocation, a mixed use community close to the town centre at Central Park, office development at Business Central and the opening of the Centre for Process Innovation's National Biologics Manufacturing Centre.

- 7.33 The main strategic locational factors for employment allocations in the Draft Local Plan are set out below:
- Performance of allocated sites in the Local Plan 1997 over the previous 20 years and available plots;
 - Based on agglomeration aspects and benefits of existing employment sites in operation;
 - Access to strategic road network, utilities and broadband; and
 - Sector based spatial preference (i.e. Aerospace / Office Location / Logistics / Engineering)
- 7.34 The main areas for employment development in the borough are located in three areas; firstly within a central area of the main conurbation (including the town centre and Central Park) to the North West of the main urban area in close proximity to the A1(M) and junction 58 and to the South East of the conurbation adjacent to the A66 circular route.
- 7.35 In comparison to the previous development plan there has been a reduction in employment sites. A small number of sites have been removed from the portfolio where there are substantial site constraints such as contamination, access and availability. Two sites have been converted from purely employment to mixed use (Faverdale Reserve site 185 and Lingfield Point Site 355). Site 376 Whessoe Road has been added as an existing employment allocation given that a housing permission on the site lapsed and has not been pursued any further given decontamination costs affecting viability.
- 7.36 The Town Centre Fringe is a mixed use regeneration area in the emerging Local Plan (policy T C 6). The Council is not proposing the site as a formal allocation as there are many constraints to overcome including flood risk, contamination, land assembly and connectivity. It is considered that the site cannot be relied upon to meet housing or employment needs over the plan period due to these constraints. The area is still however a priority for the Council and as such was identified as a regeneration area in the Draft Local Plan. Work is ongoing with Homes England, Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Environment Agency to address the constraints, funding gaps and ownership issues.
- 7.37 In the Draft Local Plan there are only 4 employment sites which are in more remote locations not within or adjacent to the main urban area. Two sites are located in close proximity to the borough boundary with County Durham to the north and are related to Aycliffe Industrial Estate. Site 363 Aycliffe is an existing allocation which is 100% occupied and consists of the Ineos Plan for polymers and chemicals. Site 360 Heighington Lane North makes up a larger employment allocation which has been identified in the County Durham Local Plan (adopted in 2020) at Merchant Park. This is within a wider existing employment area which also includes Hitachi assembly plant to the south, also within County Durham
- 7.38 Two sites are located at Teesside International Airport which straddles the borough boundary between Darlington Borough and Stockton on Tees Borough to the east. Site 404 Teesside Airport North safeguards the main terminal building, associated airport uses and employment areas to the north of the runway. The site is 95% occupied. Site 362 Teesside International Airport South is an allocation which identifies the airport as a strategic location for related employment uses. 39.3 ha of

land to the south of the runway is allocated for new development (B2 and airport related uses). This allocation supports and provides the phase 2 expansion element of Stockton's allocation and existing permission and is a priority of the airport owners the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

7.39 Current strong employment sectors in Darlington include business services, subsea and seabed companies, public administration, education and health services, manufacturing, advanced engineering and logistics. Key employment allocations to these sectors include:

- Site 368 Central Park South - Science Park based on digital, biologics and university.
- Site 356 Ingenium Parc - Engineering Sector Parc based on Cummins and Cleveland Bridge.
- Site 185 Greater Faverdale - Logistics and B2.
- Site 362 Teesside Airport South - Airport related uses.

7.40 An important economic project has been the relocation of the Darlington Farmers Auction Mart from the Town Centre to Humbleton Farm, in the north west of the borough. The land is allocated for that use through policy E 3. This is a logical location for a rural use in a rural area, particularly as it is located on the A68 and in close proximity to the A1(M) ensuring good connectivity via the road network. During the preparation of the plan an extant planning permission was implemented, the new mart constructed and the company relocated in July 2020. Although the use has now been relocated policy E 3 provides guidance on ancillary and related uses for the site.

DEVELOPMENT LIMITS

7.41 The use of development limits is a long established principle in planning, which promotes sustainable patterns of development and protects the countryside, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF. Along with the proposed allocations the development limits assist in delivering the spatial distribution of growth. Establishing boundaries around the conurbation and villages also provides certainty and clarity to decisions makers, developers and local communities. It is consistent with paragraph 16 of the framework which states, plans should contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals. As such development limits were utilised in the Draft Local Plan.

7.42 A review of the development limits was undertaken. The limits from the previous plan were used as a starting point; criteria and key principles were applied and the limits amended where necessary. Main changes involve the inclusion of the proposed allocations and commitments within the development limits. The methodology can be found in appendix 3.

PROPOSED SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN

7.43 Most responses received during the Draft Local Plan consultation focused on housing requirement targets being considered too high. Although the targets did receive general support from the building industry. Comments relating to the spatial distribution of development related largely to the housing allocations and the general principle of housing development. Substantial objection was received on numerous grounds including:

- 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.
- Utilise existing empty homes.

- Brownfield land should be used first.
- Infrastructure required to support growth.
- More homes needed for older people.

7.44 In addition, a significant number of objections were received to the Skerningham strategic allocation and proposed housing allocation at Blackwell Grange East. Comments on the employment for economic growth chapter of the plan were generally supportive of the proposed employment allocations. Some requested greater flexibility in uses permitted on employment sites

7.45 Despite the level of objection received from local communities on the level and distribution of housing growth, it was considered that the housing target was justified and the locational strategy of the Draft Local Plan was still the most appropriate and sustainable approach for the reasons outlined in this paper. The strategy for distributing the requirements for housing and employment land were therefore carried forward in the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

The key elements of the strategy are:

- To ensure that the main urban area continues to be the prime focus for both housing and employment development in recognition as the principal service centre at the top of the settlement hierarchy.
- Providing significant employment growth within and adjacent to the main conurbation, again to reflect the settlement hierarchy and for proximity to the strategic road network and other sustainable modes of transport.
- To direct housing development to the service villages of Middleton St George, Hurworth and Heighington. Supporting the role of these settlements in providing services to communities and to help retain their vitality and vibrancy.
- Growth is restricted in rural villages due to the very limited level of services and facilities available. Development will make efficient and sustainable use of existing buildings and infill opportunities. On the edges of rural villages housing development will meet clearly identified affordable needs.
- Other small villages, hamlets and other groups of buildings are treated as part of the countryside.

7.46 The proposed spatial approach is given effect by the following policies below of the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The policies define the settlement hierarchy, set out the location and quantum of development for sites allocated for both housing and employment and establish the development limits which prevent urban sprawl and inappropriate development in the countryside.

- SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy H 2 Housing Allocations
- Policy H 3 Development Limits
- Policy E 1 Safeguarding Existing Employment Opportunities
- Policy E 2 Employment Allocations

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Local Plan's strategy for the distribution of growth stems from the previous development plan approach. This is largely dictated by constrained physical geography and existing development constraints. The strategy has evolved through the various stages of plan preparation, involving consideration of a wide range of options that have been tested through sustainability appraisal and public consultation. Through the process of developing a locational strategy it has been important

to ensure that additional growth is planned in a way that delivers the development requirements and local ambitions yet respects the character of the borough and delivers sustainable communities.

- 8.2 The spatial approach has had to take account of many factors, not least the requirements of national planning policy, sub-regional and local economic priorities and the settlement hierarchy. The resulting strategy, as set out across a number of policies in the Proposed Submission Local Plan, seeks to provide a deliverable and sustainable pattern of growth that secures the borough's future economic prosperity and provides choice and diversity in the housing market.

APPENDIX 1

DARLINGTON BOROUGH VILLAGES

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 2019

SUMMARY

The Council have identified that some of the borough's villages, particularly the larger service villages, have capacity for housing growth. A number of allocations have been proposed at the service villages as they are considered to be sustainable and suitable locations for housing development. They have existing local services and infrastructure which can support an increase in the population.

Due to the above, the locational strategy of the emerging Local Plan is to focus housing development at the main urban area and the service villages of Heighington, Hurworth and Middleton St George. An up to date assessment has been carried out of the borough's villages in terms of their existing infrastructure and services to support this approach.

A desk top assessment has been carried out of each village and a site visit undertaken to supplement and verify information in August 2019. The tables below outline the general provision of existing infrastructure, services and facilities at each village and provide an overall sustainability rating (poor, average or good). It should be noted that an assessment of sustainability can include a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors, subsequently the information gathered below is not exhaustive and focuses on key practical elements.

The overall conclusion of the assessment is that, at this point in time, the service villages do provide a good and wide range of existing services, facilities and infrastructure. They all have a rating of good and it is considered that the settlements will be able to support future growth. An increase in population will also assist in supporting and sustaining the existing facilities and infrastructure and could also result in the delivery of new or enhanced provision. The rural villages and smaller settlements in the borough all have some deficiencies in the key elements assessed. Some score better than others, however in general it is considered that there are more sustainable locations for development in the borough than these locations.

VILLAGE ASSESSMENTS

Village	Heighington
Summary	A service village located in the north western area of the borough, adjacent to the boundary with County Durham. There are a number of local services which meet day to day needs in the village including education provision. Close to other services, facilities and areas of employment at Newton Aycliffe. Adjacent to the strategic highway network (A1M) and good public transport connections via the bus service to Darlington and Bishop Auckland.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No 1 Arriva).
Public transport - Rail	Heighington station is situated approximately 2.25km from the village centre with links to Darlington, Bishop Auckland, Middlesbrough and Saltburn. Hourly service, reduced on Sundays. The station is connected to the village via a cycle path.
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to the cycle network however there is a traffic free cycle path which connects the village to Heighington train station.
Primary Schools Proximity	- Church of England Primary School
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village Hall - St Michael's Church - Allotment site
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SPAR convenience shop - Two public houses - Takeaway - Hairdressers
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing fields associated with the primary school. - Large area of open space and children's play area to the east of Redworth Road. Includes two football pitches, basket ball court and small skate park area. - Areas of informal open space within village centre. - Good access to the surrounding countryside.

Overall Sustainability Rating	Good
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Village	Hurworth / Hurworth Place
Summary	A service village, located in the south of the borough adjacent to the River Tees. The village has a wide range of services and community facilities including health and education provision. It is also located on a frequent bus route. The settlement has a good link to the strategic highway network (A66). It is also in relatively close proximity to the main urban area of Darlington
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No 12 Arriva)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Access to some cycle routes however limited connectivity with the main urban area.
Primary Schools Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hurworth Primary
Secondary Schools Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hurworth School (Secondary) - Priory House School (specialist day school age 7 – 19)
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hurworth Grange Community Centre - Rockcliffe Court GP Surgery and pharmacy - Two allotment sites - All Saints Church - Hurworth Methodist Church (café and meeting space)
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car service centre - SPAR convenience shop and post office - Dental surgery - Physiotherapy clinic - Two public houses - Restaurant - Barbers - Hairdressers - Estate agents

Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing pitches associated with both the primary and secondary school - Informal open space and children's play area at community centre. - Informal open space at Hurworth village centre. - Private golf course and sports pitches at Rockliffe Hall (private). - Good access to the open countryside and River Tees.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Good

Village	Middleton St George / Middleton One Row
Summary	Large service village located in the western part of the borough. Adjacent to Oak Tree and Durham Tees Valley Airport. There are numerous services and community facilities in the village including education provision. Open space /recreation space is also very good. The village could be better provided with a more regular bus service, however the village is also on the local rail line which provides a frequent service to Darlington and other locations. Cycle links are also very good. The village is in close proximity to the strategic highway network (A66) and also relatively close to the main urban area of Darlington.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat hourly (No 12 Arriva).
Public transport - Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dinsdale station located within the centre of the village. Main service runs between Darlington and Saltburn. Two trains per hour. Links also to Bishop Auckland, Newcastle, Durham and Chester-le-Street but more limited services. Reduced service on Sundays.
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW and cycle routes. Cycle routes link to main urban area.
Primary Schools Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St George's Church of England Academy
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Centre - Woman's Institute Hall - Private nursery - GPs practice located at Oak Tree, approximately 1.35km from the village centre. - Two allotment sites.
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convenience stores (Londis and Premier Store) - Pharmacy - Dental Surgery - Vets Practice - Pet shop - Barbers - Three public houses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restaurant - Takeaway - Betting shop - Hair dressers
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water park - Cricket club, pitch and social club - Play park, informal open space and playing pitch in central location - Playing field associated with primary school - Wildlife friendly open space and local nature reserve - Good access to the countryside and the river Tees to the south
Overall Sustainability Rating	Good

Village	Bishopton
Summary	Rural village located in the north west of the borough in close proximity to the borough boundary with Stockton. Some but limited services and facilities; does have primary school provision. Modes of sustainable transport limited and in a relatively remote location.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service – operates three journeys on a Monday only (No 20 Scarlet Band)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	- Bishopton Primary School
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	- St Peters Church
Local Shops and Services	- Two public houses - Village Hall
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Playing field associated with the primary school - Small areas of informal open space in the centre of the village. - Good access to the countryside - Bishopton Equestrian Centre (private)
Overall Sustainability Rating	Average

Village	Brafferton
Summary	Rural village located in the north of the borough adjacent to the river Skerne and A1M. Good access the strategic and local highway network. Limited community facilities and services but relatively close to the main urban area of Darlington. No direct access to a bus route, good access to PROW and cycle routes.
Public transport - Bus	Close to a frequent service on the A167 but not served directly (No 5 5A 7 8 X21 Arriva). Routes include a frequent daytime service every 15 minutes Monday – Saturday (No 7). There is a footpath link to the service but likely that there is still a reliance on private vehicles.
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW and cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village hall.
Local Shops and Services	N/A
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas of informal open space along High House Lane. - Access to the countryside. - Private golf course at Hall Garth Golf and Country Club in close proximity to the village (private facility). - Public house situated some distance away on the A167.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	High Coniscliffe
Summary	Rural village located in the south west of the borough. It is a linear settlement situated along the A67, a main route into Darlington and adjacent to the river Tees. Adjacent to a number of other small rural villages but all have limited services and facilities. However good access to a frequent bus service into the main urban area.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No X75 X76 Arriva)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Some but limited access to cycle routes (do not connect with a wider area).
Primary Schools Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary School
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St Edwin's Church - Preschool/playgroup in church hall.
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public House
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wellfield Tennis Club (private club) - Good access to the countryside and river Tees. - Area of informal open space in the village centre (adjacent to the church).
Overall Sustainability Rating	Average

Village	Low Coniscliffe
Summary	Rural village which is situated adjacent to the river Tees and is set back from the A67 (Coniscliffe Road), a main route into Darlington. Adjacent to a number of other small rural villages with limited services and facilities. The A1M is in close proximity to the west, however can only be accessed via junctions further to the north or south. Very limited services and facilities but the village is in close proximity to the main urban area of Darlington and on a frequent bus route.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No X75 X76 Arriva)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. The village is close to good links to the cycle network, north of Coniscliffe Road.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village book exchange facility.
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public house situated on the A67 in close proximity to the village. Accessible via public footpath.
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the open countryside and river Tees. - The village is in close proximity to Merrybent Community Woodland.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Average

Village	Merrybent
Summary	Rural village which forms a linear settlement along the A67, a main route into Darlington. Adjacent to a number of other small rural villages with limited services and facilities. The A1M is adjacent to the village to the east, however can only be accessed via junctions further to the north or south. No community facilities or services however in relatively close proximity to the main urban area of Darlington and on a frequent bus route. Expected that there would still be a heavy reliance on private vehicles.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No X75 X76 Arriva)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW and cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	N/A
Local Shops and Services	N/A
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Access to the open countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Neasham
Summary	Rural village located in the south eastern part of the borough adjacent to the river Tees. It is located on the borough boundary with North Yorkshire. Limited services and facilities within the village and poor access to modes of sustainable transport. Situated between Hurworth and Middleton St George. Connectivity to these villages limited. A wide variety of services are available in these adjacent villages however access would largely be required via a private vehicle.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service operates three journeys on a Monday only (No 20 Scarlet Band)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Some links with the cycle network but no formal connections to the main urban area.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	N/A
Local Shops and Services	- Public House
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Good access to the river Tees and open countryside. - Open space in centre of the village which opens out onto the river Tees.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Piercebridge
Summary	Rural village located in the western area of the borough, adjacent to a number of other small rural villages and the borough boundary with County Durham; in a more remote location. River Tees in close proximity to the south. Some services in the village and surrounding settlements but these are limited. The settlement is set back from the A67, one of the local roads into the Darlington main urban area which is served by a frequent bus service. The settlement is a substantial distance from the main urban area, likely to be a reliance on private vehicles.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 30 mins (No X75 X76 Arriva)
Public transport - Rail	NA
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Limited/poor access to the cycle network.
Primary Schools Proximity	NA
Secondary Schools Proximity	NA
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St Mary's Church
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two public houses - Post office - Farm shop and coffee shop
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal open space at village centre. - Good access to the river Tees and open countryside. - Roman fort
Overall Sustainability Rating	Average

Village	Sadberge
Summary	Rural village located in the eastern area of the borough, within relatively close proximity to the main urban area. Good cycle links to the main urban area but access to a bus service is poor. The village has experienced a decline in services and facilities over recent years. Close to the service village of Middleton St George but distance would mean reliance on private vehicles for access, also no footpath links. In close proximity to the strategic highway network (A66) and the borough boundary with Stockton.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service operates three journeys on a Monday only (No 20 Scarlet Band)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Good links to cycle routes which connect to the main urban area and Long Newton.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village hall - St Andrews Church
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two public houses.
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's play park and informal open space to the rear of Abbey Road. - Informal open space / wildlife friendly space in the centre of the village. - Good access to the countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Average

Village	Redworth
Summary	Rural village located in the north west of the borough. Situated in close proximity to Heighington village which has a number of local services and facilities. Connected via the bus service and footpaths. Also in close proximity to the borough boundary with County Durham and Shildon which is located to the north west. This settlement again has a wide range of services and facilities; accessible via the bus service. Despite the above there is a poor level of services within Redworth itself and it is likely that there would still be a reliance on private vehicles.
Public transport - Bus	Frequent bus service – daytime service Mon-Sat every 15 mins (No 1 and X1 Arriva).
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor links to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village hall
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redhall Hotel and associated leisure facilities (private).
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal open space south of High Road. - Access to open countryside. - Redworth wood in close proximity to the west.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Summerhouse
Summary	Rural village situated in the west of the borough in a remote location. Relatively close to other small villages and hamlets. Very limited access to services and facilities and poor sustainable transport links. Bus link to nearby settlements in County Durham which offer a range of services and facilities, however the service is infrequent and reliance on private vehicles would be expected.
Public transport - Bus	Limited daytime bus service Monday – Saturday every 2 hours (No 84 and 84A Scarlet Band)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Limited links to the cycle network.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	- Village hall
Local Shops and Services	- Hotel and restaurant
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Informal open space in village centre. - Good access to the countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Killerby
Summary	Rural village situated in the west of the borough adjacent to the boundary with County Durham in a remote location. Close to other small villages and hamlets. Settlement consisting of residential properties and agricultural uses. No services and facilities with poor sustainable transport links. Bus link some distance away at Summerhouse to nearby settlements in County Durham which offer a range of services and facilities. The service is infrequent and reliance on private vehicles would be expected.
Public transport - Bus	Limited daytime bus service Monday – Saturday every 2 hours (No 84 and 84A Scarlet Band). Village also not served directly, the stop at Summerhouse would need to be used.
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	N/A
Local Shops and Services	N/A
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Good access to the countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Denton
Summary	Rural village/hamlet situated in the west of the borough in a remote location. Relatively close to other small villages and hamlets. Small settlement consisting of residential properties and agricultural uses; no services or facilities. Bus link to nearby settlements in County Durham which offer a range of services and facilities, however the service is infrequent and reliance on private vehicles would be expected.
Public transport - Bus	Limited daytime bus service Monday – Saturday every 2 hours in close proximity to village (No 84 and 84A Scarlet Band).
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	N/A
Local Shops and Services	N/A
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Good access to the countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Great Stainton
Summary	Rural village located in the north eastern area of the borough adjacent to the boundaries with County Durham and Stockton. Situated in a remote location adjacent to other rural villages. Very limited services and facilities with poor access to sustainable transport links.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service passes through the village but does not stop. Would have to use stops at nearby Bishopston. Service also only operates three journeys on a Monday. (No 20 Scarlet Band)
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	
Local Shops and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public house
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal open space in centre of the village. - Good access to countryside.
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

Village	Little Stainton
Summary	Rural village located in the north eastern area of the borough in a remote location. Adjacent to other rural villages. Linear settlement of residential properties and agricultural uses. No services or facilities and poor sustainable transport links.
Public transport - Bus	Bus service passes adjacent to the village but does not stop. Would have to use stops at Bishopton. Service also only operates three journeys on a Monday. (No 20 Scarlet Band).
Public transport - Rail	N/A
PROW/ Cycle Routes	Good access to PROW. Poor access to cycle routes.
Primary Schools Proximity	N/A
Secondary Schools Proximity	N/A
Community Facilities	N/A
Local Shops and Services	N/A
Recreation Space and Playing Pitches	- Access to the countryside
Overall Sustainability Rating	Poor

APPENDIX 2

LOCAL PLAN 2016-2036 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out the background to developing a locational strategy for Darlington's emerging Local Plan, with specific reference to identifying potential strategic development locations to grow and expedite housing delivery to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. It sets out the areas of the Borough which have been identified as having potential for delivering new houses on a strategic scale, and considers the most appropriate ways in which the Council can further explore that potential.

BACKGROUND

The Core Strategy, adopted in 2011, set out a locational strategy for the Borough to concentrate development in the main urban areas. In relation to housing, this meant development would be concentrated on previously developed land in the urban area, including Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe, and growth zones at the North West and Eastern Urban fringes. If sufficient dwellings were not delivered, it was planned that further sites would be released in sustainable villages and on the urban fringe.

As has been identified elsewhere, Darlington is pursuing a growth agenda which seeks to deliver 10,000 dwellings and 6,000 new jobs over the period 2016 to 2036. Since the Core Strategy's adoption, it has become apparent that the strategy it identified will not deliver sufficient dwellings to meet the Borough's need for new homes. This is partly due to under delivery in these locations, but also because the plan period have been extended until 2036 and the number of dwellings required in the Borough each year is higher than was previously being planned for.

In addition to ensuring sufficient land is available to deliver housing over the plan period, the Council must ensure there is a supply of sites which will deliver the homes needed in the short term, specifically over a rolling five year period. Whilst the housing requirement can be phased over the plan period, for example projecting that delivery will increase later in the plan period when new infrastructure is developed, it is important that the Borough's unmet housing need is met as soon as possible and the housing market continues to function effectively.

Whilst the Core Strategy's housing strategy will not deliver sufficient dwellings over the new Local Plan's plan period, and will particularly under deliver in the early years due to various site specific and housing market issues, it continues to be a sound plan for making the best use of land to meet a significant proportion of the Borough's housing need. Therefore, the sites which were identified to deliver this strategy through the Making and Growing Places DPD and the Interim Planning Position Statement will form the basis of the housing allocations in the new Local Plan. However, a new strategy will build on this approach to deliver the additional dwellings.

Consideration has been given to other means of increasing housing delivery, including exporting the Borough's housing requirement to other Local Planning Authority areas and pursuing development on previously unidentified green field and brownfield sites within the urban area and significantly

extending the Borough's villages. However, it is unlikely that pursuing these strategies will provide a realistic mechanism for delivering sufficient dwellings to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. Where there are appropriate sites in these locations, they will be assessed and considered for allocation through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and be part of a range of sites to give the plan breadth and deliverability, but cannot be the whole strategy. In some cases, local people may wish to take a strategic approach to growth in their neighbourhood through Neighbourhood Planning – the Council will support them in this endeavour in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement.

Where necessary, local authorities are encouraged to pursue large, strategic sites to deliver significant numbers of new dwellings - paragraph 52 of the NPPF supports this approach stating that *'new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale developments, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities'*. Darlington began taking this approach through the growth zones identified in the Core Strategy; options for further growth zones were explored through the Issues and Scoping consultation in summer 2016, with a view to taking a master planning approach to support delivery on the most sustainable large site or sites.

Following the consultation and call for sites, the submitted sites which appeared to have the potential to contribute to strategic housing delivery were categorised into the following broad locations or zones, and are highlighted on the map at Appendix 1:

- **A new settlement to the west of the A1**
A significant area of land to the west of the A1 was submitted to the Call for Sites as a potential new settlement. Other sites in this location have not been identified previously, however, should this option be pursued, it seems likely that other landowners in the vicinity could become involved to make the area a more regular and logical shape for development.
- **South West Darlington**
A small number of medium sized sites have been promoted to the west of Darlington between the existing urban area and the A1(M). These run from the emerging development of the North West Growth Zone at West Park, alongside the existing urban area as far as the A67. To the south of the A67, some smaller sites around Low Conniscliffe have also been promoted.
- **South Darlington**
A small number of sites were submitted to the south of the Borough, some adjacent to the urban area, others relating to the villages of Hurworth and Neasham.
- **Middleton St George Village**
Four sites within or around Middleton St George were submitted to the Call for Sites. The Council is also aware of a number of other development sites in the vicinity which are being promoted through the Planning process.
- **North West Darlington**
Sites in the north west of Darlington were collected around junction 58 of the A1, with a large site submission extending from the A1 into the Faverdale area to join the existing urban area.
- **North and North East Darlington**
To the north and north east of Darlington, a range of sites were submitted which would extend the urban area to the north. This included one large site to the north east, with a number of smaller sites making a cluster to the north around North Road, the A167.

ANALYSING POTENTIAL STRATEGIC SITES

The locations identified have been considered against a number of criteria in order to understand whether they would be suitable strategic sites and benefit from the Council and its various partners pursuing a master planning approach to demonstrate how they can be delivered. This was an exercise in determining the best route through the plan process to secure delivery on the most sustainable and deliverable sites, rather than an exercise where sites were competing to secure allocation in the Local Plan, which will take place later in the plan making process.

This assessment is a high level analysis of strategic factors, rather than a detailed consideration of particular sites, which will take place through the HELAA and master planning processes. Where site allocations are identified and in due course, allocated through the Local Plan process, many Borough wide policies will also apply to their development. This will include those relating to maintaining quality of development through design and infrastructure, but also those relating to existing features of the Borough which will be protected from negative impacts to varying degrees such as heritage, ecology and landscape.

Where sites have not been identified as being able to support strategic delivery through a collaborative master planning process, there are other mechanisms through which land owners and developers can pursue housing on their sites through the Local Plan. Most sites in this category will be assessed individually or in small clusters through the land availability assessment process. Those which offer the best compromise between sustainability and deliverability, in line with the Council's Local Plan vision and objectives, will be considered for allocation for housing development where appropriate. Neighbourhood areas and villages may choose to undertake strategic planning of their own local areas and make appropriate site allocations based on their local circumstances.

The questions which were asked of sites to determine their suitability as development locations for strategic master planning are included at Appendix 2 and reflect two key themes – would areas contribute to the national, regional and local visions being realised, and would they have potential to align with the Sustainability Appraisal Framework's objectives. The former of these includes the prospect of sites contributing to national priorities and agenda such as the promotion of early and sustained housing growth and regional priorities such as the Northern Powerhouse agenda and Transport for the North. Other considerations included the potential to contribute to sub regional priorities as identified by the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Local measures were drawn from the sustainability objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report and the vision and objectives developed following the Local Plan Issues and Scoping consultation over summer 2016.

South of Darlington

The area to the south of Darlington, between the main urban area and the River Tees (which represents the Borough boundary) was considered to have limited potential as a strategic site prior to the Issues and Scoping consultation in summer 2016. However, it was acknowledged that there was a significant area of land to the south of the Borough which is currently undeveloped and could have potential for development.

Only a small number of sites in the vicinity were submitted to the Council through the call for sites in summer 2016. Some of these were adjacent to the urban area, whereas others related to the villages of Hurworth and Neasham, to the south of this area, close to the Borough boundary.

The area which is currently undeveloped is split by the A66, a major road which forms part of the Strategic Road Network. There is limited capacity to develop new dwellings between the urban area and the A66, although some development sites had been identified through previous land availability assessments. The area to the south of the A66 is separated from the urban area by the major road, a boundary which currently clearly marks the extent of the urban area.

As the sites in this area are not strategic in form or scale, and there is limited potential to develop a strategic site which relates well to the existing urban form, they will be taken forward through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage, rather than being master planned as a potential strategic site.

New Settlement

Prior to the Issues and Scoping consultation, consideration was given to meeting the Borough's housing need through a new settlement, as encouraged in the NPPF. Given the location of existing development and physical features in the borough, a desk based study suggested that if a discrete 'new settlement' solution was to be pursued, it would probably need to be located in the rural areas to the east and west of the Borough. These areas were therefore suggested through the Issues and Options consultation; however, no specific locations were identified.

A very large site in the rural area to the west of the A1 was submitted to the 'call for sites' with a concept plan for the delivery of a significant number of dwellings – sufficient to meet all the Borough's housing needs over the plan period and beyond, should it be taken forward. This was put forward by one landowner and its configuration responds to a land ownership boundary, rather than physical features or a concept of urban form. It is likely that the shape would be refined and rationalised if it was taken forward as a strategic master planned site, meaning that other land owners and stakeholders would need to become involved in the process.

Developing a new settlement could have significant advantages including (but not limited to) providing a large number of dwellings over the plan period and beyond, alongside the infrastructure and services to meet its residents' needs, with limited impact on the existing services in the Borough. A new settlement would have the potential to include a mix of land uses, including employment and retail of an appropriate scale, enabling residents to access jobs and services in a sustainable fashion. In addition, the areas which could accommodate new settlements are likely to be relatively attractive to the market and therefore developers. Whilst significant developments have the potential to be environmentally damaging, a large, comprehensively planned site is more likely to be able to deal with issues strategically, reducing the impact of development by selecting the most appropriate areas within the site to be developed and providing mitigation where possible.

A new settlement would also have significant disadvantages which make it unlikely to be a suitable strategic option to deliver Darlington's housing requirements during the current plan period. One of the key findings of the Issues and Scoping consultation was the value local stakeholders place on Darlington's urban form – an historic market town surrounded by countryside and rural villages. This has been incorporated into the Local Plan's Vision and Objectives. The development of a significant new settlement would have a significant impact on the rural area, particularly to the west of the A1 and would mark a significant change to the urban form, expanding beyond the strategic road network and creating a new area of housing with very limited links to existing services and facilities.

Whilst a new community could be established within the new development, physical barriers would prevent easy links to the existing urban area.

The detached nature of any new settlement, and the rural nature of the new settlement proposed in particular, means that significant infrastructure would need to be established before dwellings could be delivered at any significant rate. This would include establishing a road network with connections to the urban area and the strategic network, but also schools, other Council services and utilities. The scale of a new settlement would be likely to support significant infrastructure in its own right, potentially including systems which require a critical mass of development to be viable such as renewable energy installations.

However, the time likely to be required to establish a master plan for a site of this scale and establishing new infrastructure means that it is unlikely that there would be new dwellings early in the plan period and could introduce viability issues which would further limit the sites deliverability. Whilst a new settlement could deliver significant numbers of dwellings over the medium to long term, it is unlikely to make a contribution to the authority's five year supply of housing land, increasing the pressure to find additional sites in the Borough which will deliver in this period.

As well as meeting other local objectives, including delivering new dwellings, the Local Plan will also respond to wider opportunities for growth, both in relation to specific sites and across the Borough and the sub region. It is not clear that a new settlement, particularly in the west of the Borough, would contribute to realising other opportunities for infrastructure development beyond those required to support itself. At this stage, the Council is not aware of any proposals which large numbers of new dwellings in this location would either support or be supported by.

It is acknowledged that a new settlement would provide a strategic scale site that could deliver a large proportion of the Borough's housing needs over the middle and later portions of the plan period with limited impacts in infrastructure elsewhere in the Borough. However, it is unlikely that there would be delivery early in the plan period, meaning additional sites would still need to be allocated to meet housing needs, including the backlog identified in the SHMA. Furthermore, the site suggested for a new settlement is unlikely to provide opportunities to meet local, regional and national objectives, beyond the provision of significant new housing. It would not take advantage of the proposed improvements to strategic highway links between the A1 and A66 referenced in the Infrastructure Plan for the Tees Valley and Transport of the North infrastructure plans. Therefore, it is not proposed to instigate a master planning process to deliver a new settlement within the Borough. Any potential sites in this area will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

Middleton St George

There has been significant interest in housing development in and around Middleton St George in recent years, which has resulted in a number of new homes being proposed and developed around the village. A Neighbourhood Area has also been designated in the village, with the Parish Council leading on producing a Neighbourhood Plan. As the area was experiencing significant change, the issues and scoping consultation sought views on whether the area should be planned with a view to it making a strategic contribution to housing delivery.

The response to the Issues and Scoping consultation in terms of site submissions was limited to relatively small disparate sites in separate land ownership, which are unlikely to yield strategic numbers of new dwellings or deliver a step change in infrastructure provision to support a much larger community.

However, as with other large villages, there may be scope for additional housing and associated social and physical infrastructure. Middleton St George will be considered in terms of how it can contribute to the vision and objectives in the Local Plan, but not as a site for comprehensive master planning to facilitate significant housing delivery. As the local community is already undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, it may wish to consider using this avenue to take a strategic approach to future development in the village. The sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

South West Darlington

This potential area for strategic scale development is lies between the A1(M) and the existing urban area, north of Conniscliffe Road. This area has been promoted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment previously and considered for inclusion in the Making and Growing Places DPD, the predecessor to the new Local Plan which was withdrawn prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for examination. The sites identified were not included at that stage because other more sustainable sites were projected to deliver the required number of dwellings at that time. However, sites in this area have been resubmitted through the call for sites in summer 2016 and must be considered in the current context.

A significant number of dwellings could be delivered in this location, although constraints including the proximity of the A1(M), an HSE zone and various waterways in the vicinity are likely to reduce the developable area. Despite this, it is estimated that the sites submitted could deliver in excess of 1,000 dwellings in a highly marketable area, with potential to include a range of house types and tenures. This level of development is also likely to be able to support local facilities such as small scale retail and primary education. However, their relatively constrained nature and size of the site mean that they are less able to accommodate a range of uses including employment, retail and service; to do so would reduce the number of dwellings which could be delivered significantly.

Development on the sites submitted has potential to relate well to the existing urban area and reflect the Local Plan vision and objectives which seek to retain the compact urban form. The sites could access existing infrastructure and service provision in the town, including Darlington Town Centre. Combined with other sites on the west of the town, development in this area could also improve local transport links between communities by providing new routes around the urban area, reducing congestion at key junctions known to be operating at or over capacity.

This area has the potential to be a development location of some significance, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of local objectives. However the site's size and local constraints mean that it is unlikely that delivery in this area will be strategic in nature, or be significantly boosted by a comprehensive master planning process. Instead, the area will be part of the wider narrative of the Borough's housing strategy and the sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

North and North East Darlington

The area to the north and north east of Darlington's urban area has been identified by land owners and developers as having scope to accommodate residential development over a number of years. Numerous sites have been considered through the SHLAA process and some adjacent to the urban area were included in the Preferred Options drafts of the Making and Growing Places DPD. The area was included in the Issues and Scoping consultation as a potential northern extension to the town and numerous sites in this location were submitted to the call for sites during the summer of 2016. These included both small and large sites in a variety of ownerships, to the east and west of the A167 at Beaumont Hill, and to the north of Great Burdon and Whinfield at Skerningham.

A potential strategic site in this area would be defined to the south and west by the existing urban area and road network to the south and south west, but further to the north and northwest drawing a clear boundary is more complex. If a strategic site is to be pursued in this location, it would be necessary to determine whether the A167, the East Coast Mainline Railway or another boundary such as land ownership represented the most appropriate limit when embarking on the master planning process. The sites submitted also extend beyond the urban area to the north east in a large arc, and if taken forward in their entirety, would include development beyond the Skerne, a significant physical boundary. It may be that the full extent of these areas is too great for the current Local Plan's scope, and that more than one strategic site and master planning area is appropriate.

A mix of land uses could be delivered in this location, including employment and retail of an appropriate scale, growing Darlington's economy and enabling residents of the new development and the existing settlement to access jobs and services sustainably. A site of this size would have the potential to provide a significant number and mix of dwellings over the plan period and beyond, as well as green, social and physical infrastructure to support its occupants.

Significant development in this area would take the form of a large urban extension, maintaining the existing form of a main town and historic centre with surrounding countryside and villages, a significant Local Plan objective. The area has potential to make connections to the existing urban area and would be likely to encourage support of Darlington Town Centre as the Borough's main commercial centre, although appropriate links would need to be established to make this a reality. The proximity to the existing urban area means that infrastructure connections such as those to local road networks and utilities are likely to be possible early in the plan period, enabling delivery of development earlier in the plan period than more remote sites.

The Council is aware that the existing road network in this part of Darlington handles a significant number of vehicle movements which would usually be expected to use the strategic road network to travel between south Durham and Teesside, alongside the needs of local traffic. As well as making links to the existing local road network, a site of this size and scale would require an internal road network to support the land uses being accommodated there. It is likely that this new local road network could be configured and phased to support the alleviation of some of the issues on the wider local network in the medium and longer term.

Consideration has also been given to whether strategic sites could go beyond meeting Darlington's local needs and contribute to meeting sub regional and national goals. Highways England and the Tees Valley Combined Authority have both identified that the configuration of Darlington's road network has the potential to limit growth in both Durham and the Tees Valley, due to its importance

for movement between the A1(M) and Teesport. Darlington's local and strategic road networks are closely linked, particularly because the configuration A1(M) junctions to the north and south of the town encourage drivers traveling between the motorway and the Tees Valley to use local roads to complete their journeys. This results in lengthened journey times for travellers and increased congestion on routes to the north of the town, as well as issues associated with large goods vehicles travelling through predominantly residential areas to complete their journeys.

Planning the development of new dwellings in this location, along with an improvement or extension to the strategic road network, could assist in realising the delivery of both schemes. Whilst limited work has been undertaken to identify solutions to these regional transport issues, and no commitment has currently been made to selecting or funding a solution, the option of a new link between the A1 (M) and the A66 across the north of Darlington is being explored by the relevant agencies. This would provide a more suitable route for journeys which would usually be made on the strategic road network, benefitting the Tees Valley as a whole and have local benefits of removing strategic transport from the local road network. The combined benefits of boosting housing delivery and delivering key infrastructure make this a logical and coherent way to meet a number of objectives in a relatively short timeframe, with potential to bid for funding for key infrastructure aimed at bringing forward housing delivery.

However, a strategic site in this location would not be without significant challenges, given the scale of the site and the local constraints. As well as the use of green field land and the impact on the local landscape, it is understood that there are areas of flood risk, heritage and ecological value which would need to be taken into account through a master planning process. Other constraints may also be present on site which have not yet been fully explored - a number of these issues were raised by local residents in response to the Issues and Scoping consultation and the prospect of smaller sites being developed, as proposed in the various iterations of the Making and Growing Places DPD. These would need to be taken into account whilst undertaking a master planning process and could become risks to the delivery of housing on the site over the plan period. However, whilst significant developments have the potential to be environmentally damaging, a large, comprehensively planned site is more likely to be able to deal with issues strategically, reducing the impact of development by selecting the most appropriate areas within the site to be developed and providing mitigation where possible.

The northern and north eastern area of the Borough has potential to deliver a significant number of dwellings in the form of an extension to the existing urban area. The range of available sites and the proximity to the urban area makes it likely that some dwellings could be delivered early in the plan period. This would assist in meeting with local and national objectives for expediting and increasing housing delivery. There is also potential for providing new strategic infrastructure which would have a positive impact on economic growth both locally and sub regionally, and on the quality of the environment experienced by people living, working and travelling through the Borough. There are likely to be constraints which would need to be addressed if the site was to deliver housing on a strategic scale, either by being resolved or incorporated into the development. Consideration would also need to be given to how the site could be developed should new strategic infrastructure not be secured and further local infrastructure needed to be developed.

This area has the potential to be a housing development location of strategic scale, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of sub regional and local objectives, including the development

of strategic infrastructure and maintaining the Borough's existing urban form. However, there are a number of physical and infrastructure constraints in the vicinity which would need to be taken into account in developing the sites. A relatively large number of land owners, developers and other stakeholders have expressed an interest in the site's development. It is proposed that a comprehensive master planning exercise would be an effective way to explore the site's potential to be a key pillar of the housing strategy in the Local Plan, and to understand its suitability to deliver new dwellings over the plan period. In tandem with this, the individual sites will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

North West

Sites put forward in response to the 'Call for Sites' in the north west of Darlington were clustered around Junction 58 of the A1(M), with a large site submission extending from the motorway into the Faverdale area to join the existing urban area. Most of the land identified has been promoted for a number of years through the SHLAA process, or the Employment Land Review. A significant part of this cluster of sites was included in the Core Strategy as part of the 'North West Urban Fringe', although for employment uses rather than residential development (residential development was included in the growth zone, but further to the south). It was also included in drafts of the Making and Growing Places DPD and the Interim Planning position Statement as a potential employment land allocation.

The area has the potential to be a significant development location, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of local objectives, including the delivery of new houses whilst maintaining the Borough's compact urban form. To the east of the A1(M) in particular, there is potential for sites to relate to the existing residential areas, link into existing infrastructure (including relating to Darlington Town Centre). The site could also contribute to improvements to the Borough's network of infrastructure, including the local road network and providing new routes around the urban area. Alongside other development along the edge of Darlington, the site could also improve local transport links by providing new routes around the urban area, reducing congestion at key junctions known to be operating at or over capacity.

However, as the Council intends to continue to promote the majority of this area primarily as an employment site, a use particularly important for promoting and supporting economic growth, there is limited scope for promoting housing development through a master planning approach in this location. The area will be part of the wider narrative of the Borough's housing strategy and the sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

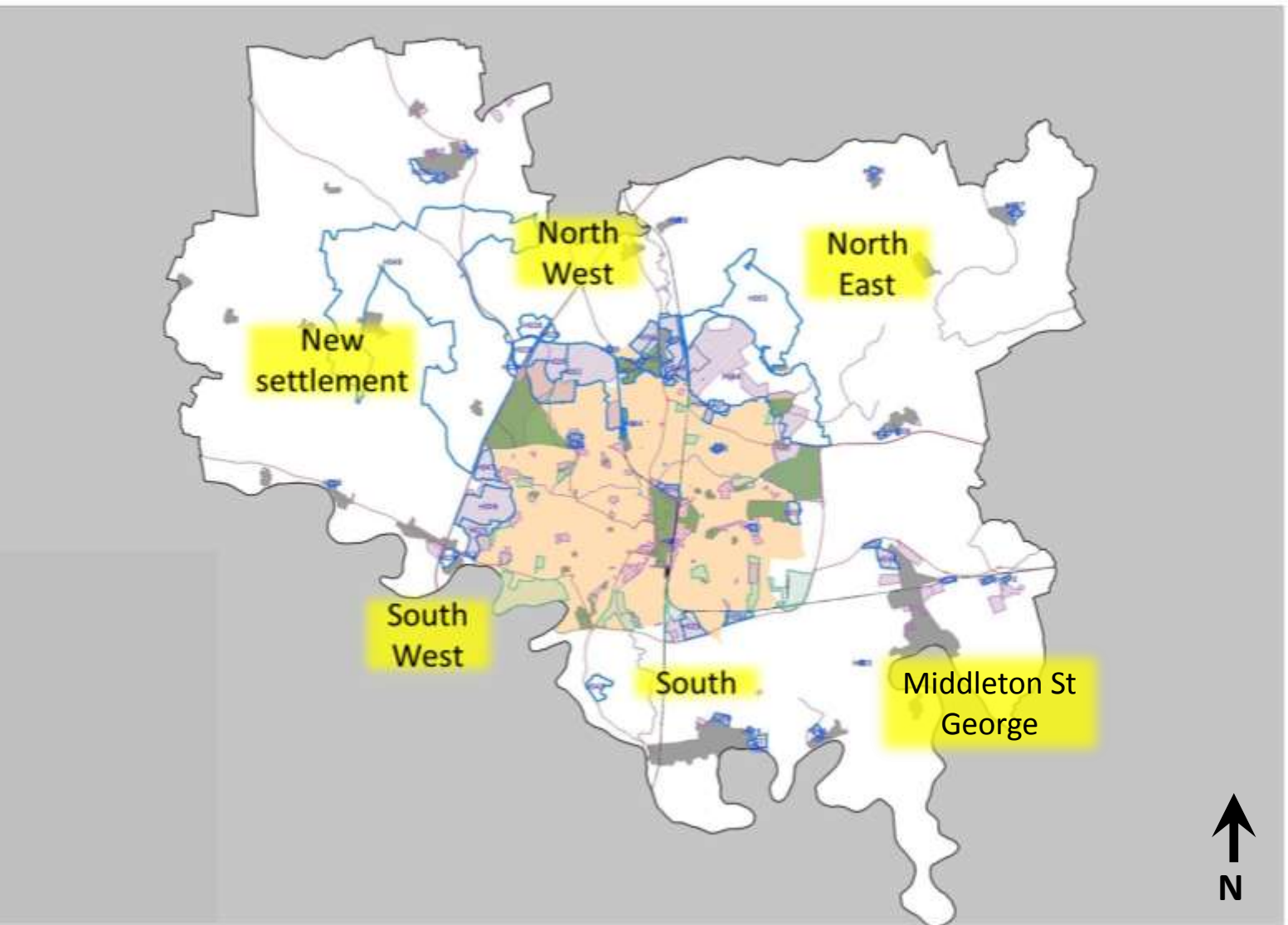
CONCLUSION

This paper sets out the background to developing a locational strategy for Darlington's emerging Local Plan, with specific reference to seeking strategic development locations to grow and expedite housing delivery to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. It sets out the areas of the Borough which have been identified as having potential for delivering new houses on a strategic scale, and considers the most appropriate ways in which the Council can further explore that potential.

It is acknowledged that the Local Plan 2016 – 2036 will require an approach to housing delivery which goes beyond that proposed in the Council's existing Core Strategy and the (now withdrawn) Making and Growing Places DPD. In most cases, the sites which were supported for allocation in those documents continue to offer the most sustainable options for meeting housing need and have been included in the Council's Interim Planning Position Statement. However, they will not deliver sufficient dwellings over the plan period to meet the Borough's identified housing needs. This paper has explored the ways in which various locations around the Borough could contribute to housing delivery on a strategic scale.

Given the need to expedite and boost the supply of housing to meet the Borough's objectively assessed housing needs, the Council has explored the options for a locational strategy which will achieve this aim, taking on board the NPPF guidance that *'new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale developments, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities'*.

Potential areas for strategic scale development have been assessed against a number of criteria to determine whether they will be taken forward into Stage 2 of the Local Plan process. It is recommended that the North, North East, North West and South West areas be the subject of further detailed analysis as part of developing the evidence base for the Local Plan. The proposed new settlement to the west of the borough is not considered appropriate as a strategic location. Similarly, Middleton St George is not considered strategic, but it is recognised that future development potential exists and should be considered through the HELAA and, potentially the Neighbourhood Planning processes.



APPENDIX 2: IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING STRATEGIC HOUSING SITES – FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Is it a strategic site?	
Site size	Is the site area/combined site area large enough to accommodate a significant number of dwellings – would their delivery be critical to the delivery of the plan
Nature of area	Is the site in an area where substantial change is occurring, will occur over the plan period or where substantial change could be accommodated?

National and regional objectives	
National and regional objectives	Will the site contribute to national and regional objectives such as accelerating housing delivery and the Northern Power House agenda.

Local Objectives	
Local regeneration objectives	Will the site/area contribute to existing local master plans/objectives
Local Plan aims and objectives	<p>create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride</p> <p>Protect, maintain and enhance Darlington's identity as a historic market town, set amongst countryside and surrounding villages with strong links to Railway, Quaker and industrial heritage.</p> <p>Maintain a vibrant, attractive and safe market town centre that embraces its historic character whilst functioning as a modern centre offering retail, culture, leisure, tourism and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The delivery of a distinctive place – cohesive market town surrounded by countryside and villages</p>

Housing and population	
SA Objectives	Can the site provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people families and older people?
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Will the site contribute to enabling the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough?</p> <p>Maintain a supply of land for new housing developments that meets the needs of the growing number of households? Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve and maintain a 5 year supply of housing land • Provide a range of housing products providing types and tenures of homes suitable for all people, including people who are unable to

	<p>access housing on the open market and for the boroughs aging population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a portfolio of sites of different sizes and delivery rates for the short, medium and long term
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Economy	
SA Objective	<p>Achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth and Increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it provide for opportunities to attract new business to the borough? • Will it facilitate the expansion and development of existing businesses?
Local Plan Objectives	<p>Will it contribute to facilitating sustainable economic growth of up to 6,000 new jobs within the borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the conditions to attract and retain investment, with a range and continuous supply of employment development opportunities in sustainable locations • Provide a choice and range of sites capable of delivering this growth. These will include established areas of existing economic development but also be flexible enough to be responsive to accommodate growth industries or the changing needs of established sectors. • Promote Darlington Town Centre as the main location for shopping, leisure, culture and employment and strengthen its role as a regional centre for such activities; • Diversify the rural economy to support businesses and existing communities whilst also protecting the boroughs valued open countryside. • Facilitate the delivery of strategic infrastructure that supports economic growth, including the supply of appropriate housing.
Tees Valley SEP	<p>Will the site/area help deliver the outcomes of the Tees Valley SEP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support innovation and sector development • Develop the workforce • Develop and provide infrastructure • Attract and retain wealth

Protecting our Climate and Reducing Energy Consumption	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Will the site support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development. Potential for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing flood risk; • generating and using renewable energy; • energy and water efficient;
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Is the area susceptible to flooding?</p>
SA Objectives	<p>Increase the borough's resilience to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, including by encouraging energy efficiency? • Will it increase renewable energy generation?
SA Objectives	Protect and improve the quality of land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce contaminated sites and increase remediation? • Will it minimise the loss of greenfield land to development?
SA Objectives	Avoid and reduce flood risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it follow the sequential approach to avoiding higher flood risk areas? • Will it include/encourage integrated drainage and rainwater harvesting?
SA Objectives	Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it contribute to reductions in air quality monitoring pollutants at monitoring locations across the Borough? • Will it reduce the risk of contamination to ground waters?

Supporting the Countryside and Natural Environment	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	Will it maintain and enhance the character and appearance of our most valued rural landscapes? Development within and around existing urban areas will be expected to protect the boroughs rich and accessible existing green Infrastructure network.
SA Objectives	Will it protect and enhance biodiversity - Will it protect and enhance ecological networks, habitat corridors and linking routes?
SA Objectives	Will it protect, and enhance access to, green infrastructure and provide opportunities for sports and recreation Will it protect existing and / or enhance / create good quality and accessible green infrastructure or open spaces? Will it promote increased access to green infrastructure?

A Well Connected Borough	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	Will the site capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. Will it support delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new development is in places where it will be accessible to all particularly by public transport, cycling and walking. • Maintain and improve transport links between communities within the borough and further afield. • Support development that enhances regionally and nationally important transport links including those offered by Banktop Station, Durham Tees Valley Airport and Teesport. • Delivery of key utilities infrastructure, including broadband, will be key to success.
Local Plan aims and objectives	Will it help secure land/funding to deliver critically important new infrastructure?
Local Plan aims and objectives	Create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure provision of necessary infrastructure to support growth including improvements to existing services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure convenient access to local goods and services • Ensure schools have sufficient capacity to support new developments within the borough and where necessary provide new provision in sustainable locations;
SA Objective	<p>Promote traffic reduction and encourage the use of public and non-motor transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce the distance people need to travel to work or to access services and facilities and will it prioritise development on well-located sites, especially the town centre? • Will it encourage the use of alternatives to car travel, including by protecting and improving walking/cycling routes and public transport routes?
TVCA Infrastructure Strategy	Enhance and retain Tees Valley's links to key cities, national and international gateways Improve road, rail and sustainable transport access to key employment sites

Supporting Cohesive, Proud & Healthy Communities	
SA Objectives	<p>Conserve Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it conserve designated and non-designated heritage assets and other elements of the historic environment? • Will it protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape, including by promoting good design? • Will it maintain separation between the main settlements in the Borough and those in surrounding districts?
Local Plan aims and objectives	<p>create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to green spaces for leisure and recreation • To build healthier homes and environments that support independence at all stages of life. • Tackle unhealthy environments by creating walkable neighbourhoods, delivering radically improved infrastructure for safe, active travel and more accessible public transport. • Create connected neighbourhoods, strong communities and inclusive public spaces that enable people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds to mix. • Design healthy workplaces, schools and leisure facilities that make the most of opportunities to encourage physical activity, healthy eating and positive mental health and wellbeing.

APPENDIX 3

DEVELOPMENT LIMITS METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Development limits are policy lines drawn on a map (the Policies Map) to assist in guiding and controlling new development. The Borough of Darlington Local Plan (1997) currently defines development limits around the main urban area and villages. Generally, the development limits were drawn tightly to limit the extent of new development to infill and small scale rounding-off, in order to protect the form and character of settlements and the surrounding countryside from further encroachment.

Identifying development limits is still considered to be the most appropriate way of indicating where development is likely or unlikely to be supported in principle. They offer sufficient flexibility to still permit development outside of identified areas where it can be justified under other policies (either local or national). The development limits identified in the current local plan are now outdated in some areas, particularly where there has been significant development during the previous plan period and they do not account for the proposed allocations in the emerging Local Plan.

The information below sets out the methodology of how the Council has revised the development limits for the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The limits set out in the Local Plan 1997 were used as a starting point and the criteria set out below applied.

CRITERIA APPLIED

The Council has revised the limits to development using the following key principles:

- That they be drawn around the 'main built form' of the settlement;
- Within the development limit, land will be generally developed, i.e. taken up by buildings, roads, car parking, etc., or will be identified as having a specific use/function in an urban environment;
- Beyond the development limit, land will be generally used for agriculture, outdoor sport (involving limited built infrastructure) or woodland or other open uses and will include farm buildings extending beyond the main built up area of the settlement;
- Development limits have been redrawn around proposed housing and employment development sites. This is to ensure that future planned development in these areas lie within the development limits. This has been undertaken for the main urban area and villages; and,
- Wherever possible, the development limit should follow clearly defined permanent features.

The following types of buildings or land will generally be outside a settlement's development limit:

- Buildings used for agricultural purposes or last in use for agricultural purposes on the edge of the settlement where their form and character are more part of the rural landscape than a built up area;

- Isolated buildings or sporadic/dispersed development e.g. individual or small groups of buildings separated from the settlement by roads or an industrial estate separated by countryside from the settlement;
- Buildings in extensive grounds on the edge of the settlement ('extensive grounds' should be determined on the basis of a comparison with other properties in the vicinity of the settlement in question);
- Existing development or schemes with planning permission approved as an exception to 'development limit' planning policy e.g. affordable housing and enabling development;
- Large rear gardens or paddocks stretching well out from the villages built form (in these circumstances it may not be possible for the development limit to follow clearly defined features). In this instance, limits will be drawn within close proximity to the existing dwelling (approx 6m to 8m to allow for modest extensions and alterations).

In areas where separate limits to development are within close proximity to one another analysis has been undertaken as to the role and significance of the area not included within development limits. Key examples are Hurworth/Hurworth Place and Middleton St. George/Middleton One Row. Typically separation of development limits should remain where:

- The land excluded contributes to the character of the area. In some instances this may be supported by a conservation area appraisal;
- Development has not significantly eroded the open nature of the area;
- The undeveloped land provides open views or an important green visual buffer between settlements;
- The land has a function that is desirable to retain undeveloped e.g. agricultural, amenity, recreation etc; and
- Relationship with service centres and local facilities such as shops, schools, public houses may also provided indicators that neighbouring developments function as separate units. If developments have clearly defined centres it will likely be appropriate to maintain some separation between developments.

SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES

Applying the above criteria the most significant alterations to development limits were around the main urban area. The limits have been redrawn largely to accommodate the proposed housing allocations and commitments which are urban extensions. The same approach has been taken at the service villages. Development limits were also removed from a number of smaller rural villages and hamlets including Killerby, Summerhouse, Denton, Little Stainton, Great Stainton and Redworth. This was to better reflect that some of these small settlements had no or very little service provision as evidenced in the village audit. These villages would be treated as being part of the countryside. Overall, it is considered that the Council has taken an appropriate and logical approach to defining the development limits of the Proposed Submission Local Plan.