Have your say in planning the future of Darlington

The Council wants your views on the way Darlington will develop and grow over the next 15 years.

A draft plan has been drawn up, showing where, when and how all developments, including the use of land and the provision of shops and services will happen in the future.

The plan works to ensure that Darlington will continue to have a thriving and modern town centre, attractive places to live and more and better job opportunities.

Before the plan is finalised, we want your views on Darlington’s future.
Some of the main issues looked at in the plan include:

**New jobs**
The Borough’s good road, rail and air links mean that it will continue to be an attractive place to do business. New premises for industry and business are planned at Faverdale and Durham Tees Valley Airport, and as part of work at Central Park and Feethams. The area around the A68/A1(M interchange) is also suitable for a visitor attraction for tourists to the North–East from the South.

**New housing**
The slowdown in the housing market won’t last forever, so we are planning for around 500 new homes to be built every year from 2010 until 2016. This will allow residents to continue to live in Darlington throughout their lives as well as providing homes for the increasing number of people coming to work here.

New housing will be built as part of mixed developments in the town centre, between the ring road and the railway to the east and north, at Central Park and the Lingfield area. Brownfield sites, such as former schools, will also be developed for new housing. No significant development is planned for the Borough’s villages; only development that supports village life is envisaged there.

The draft plan aims to increase the supply of affordable housing, and ensure that as the population gets older, there is suitable housing available for everyone.

**Shops and services**
We want to make sure that Darlington town centre continues to be popular with shoppers. To achieve this we will need new shops in areas like Commercial Street and Feethams. No new shopping developments will be needed outside the town centre before 2016, except for small shops in areas where there are currently no facilities.

The plan also includes a policy to encourage more community use of school buildings and playing fields.

**Looking after our environment**
The draft plan promotes the protection and enhancement of our local environment, including historic buildings, conservation areas, greenery and open space. It also aims to reduce things like air and water pollution, contaminated land and flooding which can pose a risk to people’s health and safety.

**Helping people live healthy lives**
We understand how important green spaces are in making Darlington a nicer place to live and work in and visit. As well as preserving these spaces, the plan looks at promoting walking and cycling as alternative ways to travel and ensures everyone has access to food shops, jobs and decent and suitable housing.

**Getting around**
The draft plan looks to make walking, cycling and using public transport in Darlington safer, more convenient, and more comfortable. The plan also looks at how traffic can be managed to reduce congestion. In the longer term, the plan looks at promoting a Tees Valley Metro to improve links between Darlington and the rest of Tees Valley.

**New developments**
As part of our commitment to reducing the Borough’s carbon dioxide emissions, new developments will have to be designed to minimise the energy and resources needed to build, use and maintain them. New developments will also have to help people feel safe and be built with respect for the Borough’s distinctive historic character.