

# Darlington Local Development Framework

Core Strategy:

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

## **Executive Summary**

This is the Scoping report for the Sustainability Appraisal of Darlington Borough Council LDF Core Strategy

The report contains:

- An updated and established list of plans policies and programmes that will influence the revised LDF Core Strategy policies.
- A detailed and up to date baseline of the Borough of Darlington
- A description of the current and likely key sustainability issues that the LDF should address
- The SA Framework (objectives and draft indicators) to appraise the LDF Core Strategy DPD objectives and policies.

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## **1 Part 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Darlington Borough Council produced a Draft Sustainability Report alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options in October 2008. In light of consultation responses and advice received a decision was made to review and refresh the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This decision was taken to ensure that the sustainability issues and problems identified for Darlington Borough are current and that the sustainability appraisal framework is fit for purpose.

### **1.2 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

1.2.1 This document is the updated Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), (including the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment) of Darlington Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

1.2.2 The appendices for this SA Scoping Report are contained in a separate companion document and should be read in conjunction with the main report.

1.2.3 The main objectives of this SA Scoping Report are to:

- Identify key messages from relevant social, economic and environmental plans, policies and programmes
- Establish an evidenced and verified sustainability baseline for Darlington Borough
- Identify the key sustainability issues and problems within the Borough
- Prepare the Sustainability Appraisal Framework
- Facilitate meaningful engagement and continuing consultation

Completion of the above objectives will contribute to ensuring that the LDF Core Strategy is as sustainable as possible. This is the overall aim of the SA process and is discussed further in section 1.5

### **1.3 Consultation**

1.3.1 The Darlington Borough Council Local Development Framework, Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) <sup>1</sup> sets out how we will consult on the preparation of Local Development Framework and Sustainability Appraisal documents. For this document we are required to consult with English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency. This consultation was also extended to other stakeholders, and individuals with an interest in the future of Darlington.

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<sup>1</sup>Darlington Borough Council, Local Development Framework, Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), 2005

## **1.4 What are Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment?**

1.4.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by European and by English law. It involves the systematic identification and evaluation of the environmental impacts of a strategic action (e.g. a plan or programme). In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive')<sup>2</sup>. The aim of the SEA Directive is,

*"... to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."* (2001/42/EC)

1.4.2 The Directive was transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'), which came into force on 21st July 2004. The SEA Regulations apply (with some specific exceptions) to plans and programmes subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or those prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure.

1.4.3 SA extends the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social concerns. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) requires Local Planning Authorities to undertake SA for each of their Local Development Documents (LDD's), including the Core Strategy. SA is, therefore, a statutory requirement for LDF's along with SEA.

1.4.4 The Government's approach is to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into a wider SA process that considers economic and social, as well as environmental effects. To this end, in November 2005, the Government published guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive ('the Guidance'). The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this document as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

1.4.5 All LDF documents should also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the Habitats Directive, in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. HRA is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project or plan on one of more sites of European nature conservation importance. Darlington Borough Council must ascertain that the LDF will not adversely effect the integrity of a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) before the LDF can be adopted. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents will be reported on separately.

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<sup>2</sup>European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

## **1.5 The Aims of the Sustainability Appraisal**

1.5.1 The overall aim of the SA process is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations into the preparation of the documents that will be collectively known as Darlington Borough Council Local Development Framework

1.5.2 In March 2005, a new Government strategy for sustainable development was set out called Securing the Future<sup>3</sup>. The following definition for sustainable development was forwarded:

*“The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.”*

To achieve this goal five key principles have been proposed;

- Living Within Environmental Limits
- Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society
- Achieving a Sustainable Economy
- Promoting Good Governance
- Using Sound Science Responsibly

These principles of sustainable development are at the heart of the SA process

1.5.3 In effect the SA process ensures that the social, economic and environmental effects of planning policies within the LDF are appraised against locally distinct sustainability objectives for compatibility. Any potential negative impacts can then be identified and action can be taken to either alter the policy or put mitigation measures in place. This process will ensure that future spatial planning in Darlington Borough will be in line with the global and local aims of sustainable development.

## **1.6 The Sustainability Appraisal Process**

1.6.1 The SA process is outlined by government guidance and is shown in figure 1. This report describes the first stage of the SA process, the SA Scoping Stage (A) which consists of five key tasks. This report will set out the findings against each of these tasks.

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<sup>3</sup>ODPM, Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)

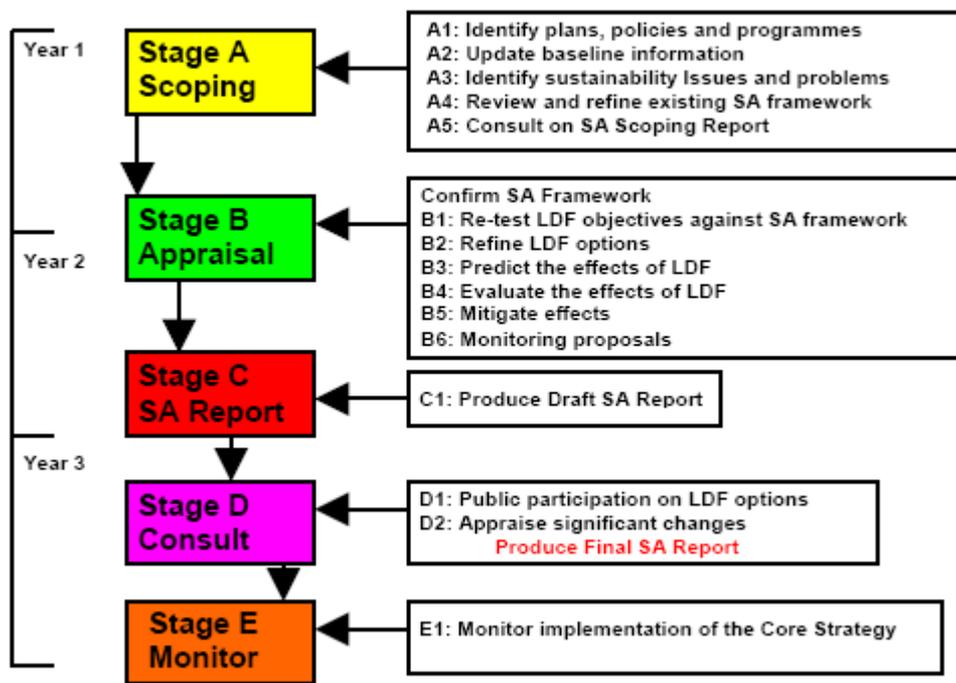


Fig 1 The Sustainability Appraisal Process

1.6.2 The next section provides a short introduction to the Local Development Framework for the Borough of Darlington

## 1.7 The Local Development Framework for the Borough of Darlington

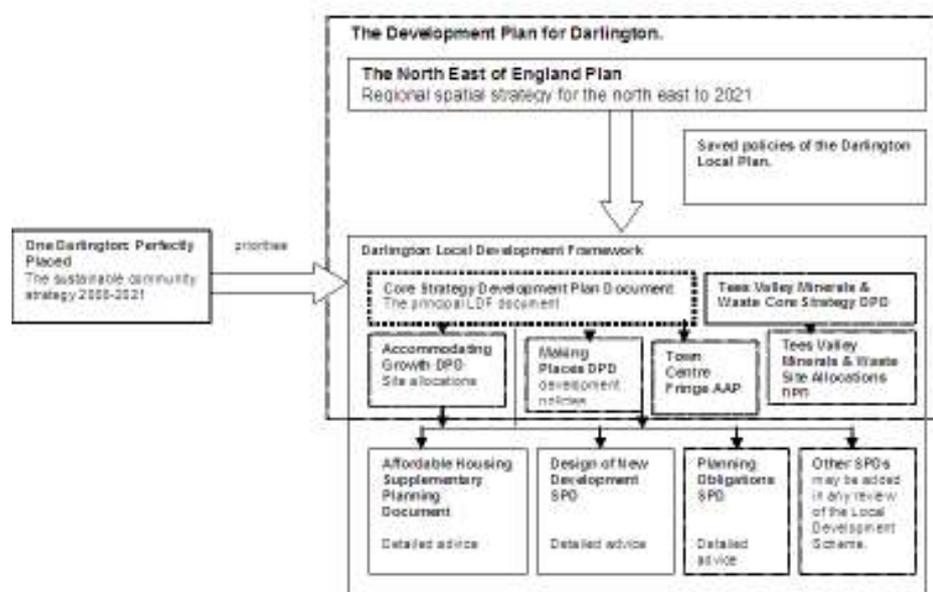
1.7.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the Government's reforms to the planning system. The Act requires all local planning authorities to produce a Local Development Framework. This will mean the existing Local Plan for Darlington Borough will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF). The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 also set out for the first time the formal requirement that the LDF will need to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>4</sup>.

1.7.2 As part of the requirement to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development the LDF will need to be closely aligned with, and deliver the spatial elements of Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'.

<sup>4</sup>OPSI, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004

1.7.3 The LDF (figure 2) is comprised of Local Development Documents (LDD's) which include the following:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD)
- Accommodating Growth DPD
- Town Centre Fringe Area Action Plan DPD
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Design of New Development SPD
- Planning Obligations SPD
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Site Allocations DPD



**Fig 2: Relationship of the LDF to ‘One Darlington: Perfectly Placed’ and the relationship of the Core Strategy to other LDF documents**

1.7.4 This SA Scoping Report only refers to the Core Strategy. Additional SA reports will be required for other LDF documents. However, as the Core Strategy is the overarching document within the LDF the SA of the Core Strategy will inform the SA of other DPD's

1.7.5 Part 2 of this report includes a review of the plans, policies, programmes and sustainability objectives that have an influence on the SA process and the Core Strategy. Part 2 comprises Task A1 of Stage A, the Scoping stage.

## **2 Part 2: Task A1 – Review of Plans Policies and Sustainability Objectives**

### **2.1 Plans Policies and Programmes**

2.1.1 The Darlington Borough Core Strategy DPD may be influenced in various ways by other plans and programmes and by external sustainability objectives such as those laid down in policies or legislation. Task A1 – The Context Review enables these relationships to be identified and potential synergies and any inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed. In addition, the reviewed plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) may contain objectives and targets that can inform the SA process.

2.1.2 According to the SA Guidance<sup>5</sup>:

*“The review should consider guidance at the international, EU or national level on sustainable development, as well as other policy documents such as Planning Policy Statements. Note should be made of any targets or specific requirements included within them, and what these relate to”.*

2.1.3 Many of these PPPs also set out environmental and wider sustainability objectives. Under the SEA Directive, reference must be made to environmental objectives. The context review satisfies this requirement

2.1.4 The context review for this Scoping review includes a list of relevant PPPs (table 1). As the context is dynamic and new or revised relevant PPPs emerge on a regular basis the context review will require continual updating throughout the SA process.

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<sup>5</sup>ODPM, Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (2005)

**Table 1 Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes**

Plans Policies and Programmes	Year
<b>International and European Community</b>	
World Summit on Sustainable Development	2002
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992
The Kyoto Protocol	2005
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)	1989
EU Council Directive 01/42/EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive	2001
EU Council Directive 08/50/EC Air Quality Directive	2008
EU Council Directive 00/60/EC Water Framework Directive	2000
EU Council Directive 80/68/EC Groundwater Directive	1980
EU Council Directive 06/118/EC Groundwater Daughter Directive	2006
EU Council Directive 07/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risk	2007
EU Council Directive 02/49/EC Environmental Noise Directive	2002
EU Council Directive 92/42/EC Habitats Directive	1992
EU Council Directive 97/49/EC Birds Directive	1997
EU Council Directive 99/31/EC Landfill Directive	1999
A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development	2001
Soil Thematic Strategy	2006
Lisbon Strategy: Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge	2000
European strategy and co-operation in education and training	2007
EU Lifelong Learning Programme	
White Paper: European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide	2001
Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe - World Health Organisation	2005
European Union Sports Charter	2001
Mental Health Action Plan for Europe: World Health Organisation	2005
The Maastricht Treaty (Treaty of the European Union)	1993
The European Landscape Convention	2000
European Spatial Development Perspective	1999
<b>National</b>	
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act	1979
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)	1981
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act	1990
Environmental Protection Act	1990
Countryside and Rights of Way Act	2000
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Working Together for Clean Air)	2000
The Urban White Paper (Our Towns & Cities: The Future)	2000
The Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: The Future)	2000
A Sporting Future for All	2000
National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision	2001
National Service Framework for Older People (Department of Health)	2001
The Government statement The Historic Environment: A Force for our future	2001
Working with the Grain of Nature: A biodiversity strategy for England	2002
Making It Happen	2002
Green Space, Better Places: Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force	2002
The Water Act	2003
The Future of Transport: A Network for 2030	2004
Safer Places: The Planning System & Crime Prevention	2004
Every Child Matters: Change for Children	2004
School Sites and Community Sports Provision: Sport England	2004
Choosing Health, Making Healthier Choices Easier	2004
The Housing Act	2004
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act	2004
Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy	2005
Making Space for Water: Taking forward a new Government Strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England	2005
White Paper: Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work	2005
Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation	2005
Sustainable Communities: Homes for All	2005
Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A guide to Good Practice	2006
Climate Change: The UK Programme	2006
Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change	2006
CLG: Code for Sustainable Homes	2006
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change	2006
Good Practice Guidance on Planning for Tourism	2006
The Future of Air Transport (2003) and the Future of Air Transport Progress Report	2006
Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper	2006
Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener	2006
Time for Play: Encouraging Greater Play Opportunities for Children and Young People	2006
A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation	2006
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing	2006
Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper	2006

## Darlington Borough Council

### Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report for the Core Strategy

The Pitt Review – Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods	2007
Conserving Biodiversity in a Changing Climate: Guidance on Building Capacity to Adapt	2007
Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper	2007
Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy	2007
Building a Greener Future: policy statement	2007
Waste Strategy for England	2007
(DCSF) The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures	2007
English Indices of Deprivation	2007
Active Design: Sport England	2007
White Paper Heritage Protection for the 21st Century	2007
Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable	2007
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Identifying appropriate land for housing development	2007
Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper	2007
State of the Natural Environment	2008
UKCIP08 Climate Change Projections	2008
Development and Flood Risk: A practice Guide Companion to PPS25	2008
Climate Change Act	2008
Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England	2008
Strategy for Sustainable Construction	2008
Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives. A cross-Government strategy for England	2008
All Landscapes Matter, A Draft Policy for Consultation	2008
Draft Flood and Water Management Bill	2009
The Government Response to the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing	2009
Be Active, Be Healthy, A plan for getting the nation moving	2009
Building a Sense of Local Belonging	2009
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development	2005
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (Supplement to PPS 1)	2006
Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for town centres	2005
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	2004
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	2005
Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management	2005
Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies	2005
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning	2008
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy	2004
Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control	2004
Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk	2006
Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms	1992
Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications	2001
Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport	2001
Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment	1994
Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning	1999
Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	1991
Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise	1992
Minerals Planning Statement 1: Planning and Minerals	2006
Minerals Planning Statement 1: Planning and Minerals, Annex 3 Natural building and roofing stone provision	2006
<b>Regional</b>	
A Biodiversity Audit of the North East	2001
The North East Rural Action Plan	2002
Sustainable Communities in the North East: Building for the Future	2003
Moving Forward: The Northern Way Growth Strategy	2004
State of the Environment Report for the North East	2004
North East Renewable Energy Strategy	2005
Regional Cultural Strategy for the North East of England	2005
Leading the Way: Regional Economic Strategy	2006
North East England Regional Housing Strategy: Quality Places for a Dynamic Region	2007
Integrated Regional Framework for the North East	2008
The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021	2008
North East England Climate Change Adaptation Study	2008
North East Strategy for the Environment	2008
Better Health, Fairer Health: NHS	2008
NE Regional Facilities Strategy	2008
Countryside Character Volume 1: North East	2008
<b>Sub-regional</b>	
Natural England Tees Lowlands Landscape Character Assessment	1994
Tees Valley Tourism Strategy	2003
Tees Valley Cultural Strategy	2003
The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy	2006
Environment Agency: The Wear Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy	2006
Tees Valley City Region Business Case and City Region Development Programme	2006
Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	2007
County Durham Biodiversity Action Plan	2007

Tees Valley Sub Regional Housing Strategy	2008
Environment Agency: The Tees Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy	2008
Environment Agency: Draft River Basin Management Plan, Northumbria River Basin District	2008
Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy	2008
Consultation on Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy	2008
Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents for the Tees Valley	2008
Tees Valley City Region Multi Area Agreement	2008
Tees Valley Housing Growth Point	2008
Tees Valley Sport Sub Regional Facilities Strategy	2009
Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment	2009
Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Assessment	2009
<b>Local</b>	
The Borough of Darlington Local Plan	1997
Adding to Quality : A Development Strategy for Darlington Town Centre	2001
Darlington Contaminated Land Strategy	2003
Moving Up – Darlington Cultural Strategy	2003
Gateway to Economic Quality: Darlington Economic Regeneration Strategy	2004
Darlington Urban Capacity Study	2004
All Together Now: A Social Inclusion Strategy for Darlington	2005
Darlington (PCT) Improving Health and Wellbeing Strategy	2005
Darlington Local Housing Assessment	2005
Darlington's Climate Change Strategy	2006
Darlington Gateway Strategy	2006
Darlington's Transport Strategy	2006
Darlington, A Town on the Move: Second Local Transport Plan	2006
Darlington Borough Council Homelessness Strategy	2006
Darlington Open Space Strategy	2007
Darlington Play and Free Time Strategy	2007
Older Persons' Housing Strategy	2007
Sustainable Community Strategy - One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	2008
Darlington Borough Council – Corporate Plan	2008
Darlington Retail Study	2008
Darlington Children and Young People's Plan	2008
Darlington Primary Capital Programme	2008
Community Safety Plan	2008
All our Futures, A Strategy for Later Life in Darlington	2008
Darlington Housing Strategy	2008
Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy	2008
Darlington's Local Area Agreement	2008
Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy	2009
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	2009

## 2.2 Key principles from the context review

2.2.1 Arising from the review of the PPPs the following key principles have been identified and need to be taken into account in the development of the Core Strategy and the SA process:

- Contribute towards the creation and enabling of a sustainable Borough by addressing unsustainable consumption and production patterns; protect natural resources; tackle climate change and spatially address social inequalities
- Reduce Darlington's contribution to climate change by reducing the energy demand of development, increase energy efficiency and use of renewable technology and reduce the need to travel to new development.
- Improve Darlington's resilience and ability to adapt to Climate Change by reducing flood risk and its impacts on people and property and ensuring that development is steered away from areas at risk where possible
- Protect and improve Darlington's resources by ensuring the sustainable and efficient use of water (ground and surface), land and air

- Adopt the hierarchical principle of waste and mineral reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery
- Ensure that current water, sewerage, waste, mineral and transport infrastructure and its capacity is taken into account
- Protect, maintain and provide opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity/geodiversity including designated and non-designated habitats and species
- Reduce pressures on the natural environment and build capacity for biodiversity to adapt to climate change for example through the protection and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure
- Promote sustainable economic development and focus regeneration in neglected areas
- Improve access to a diverse range of sustainable employment opportunities
- Protect the viability and attractiveness of the town centre
- Improve access for all to a diverse range of educational opportunities
- Encourage cultural and arts developments in accessible locations appropriate to their catchment
- Reduce the need to travel, locate development close to existing public transport networks and encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that LDF policies are produced with community and stakeholder involvement
- Provide good quality, accessible community services close to need. In particular, support rural communities and the services they depend on to enhance their local sustainability
- Create safer, secure and more cohesive and inclusive communities
- Provide decent, well designed and affordable homes
- Deliver the RSS housing allocation and meet identified needs across a range of housing types and tenures
- Improve health and wellbeing by improving the quality of and access to open space, sports, play and community facilities
- Protect and enhance nationally and locally valued heritage, cultural assets and landscapes
- Ensure that the design of all new developments are environmentally sustainable and reflect and enhance the character of Darlington borough

- 2.2.2 **Appendix 1** provides a more comprehensive analysis of relevant plans and programmes and their implications for the LDF and the SA process. The challenge is for the LDF to incorporate these key principles and apply them to the Borough.
- 2.2.3 Part 3 of this report includes the baseline data that has been used to identify and describe the key sustainability issues for the Borough of Darlington. Part 3 comprises Task A2 and A3 of the Scoping stage.

### **3 Part 3: Task A2 and A3 – Baseline Profile and Sustainability Issues**

#### **3.1 Task A2 - Baseline Information**

- 3.1.1 Baseline information helps to provide a basis for predicting and monitoring effects and identifying sustainability issues for the SA to consider. When collecting baseline data, the aim is to assemble sufficient data on the current and likely future state (forecasts) of the area to enable the DPDs effects to be adequately predicted
- 3.1.2 A key aim is to ensure that, where possible, each of the SA objectives will be 'underwritten' with comprehensive and up-to-date baseline information. Baseline information also provides the basis for monitoring effects and helps to identify sustainability problems and alternative ways of dealing with them.
- 3.1.3 Generally speaking, baseline information is collected using indicators. Examples may include carbon dioxide emissions per capita or the percentage of people who feel safe whilst outside at night.
- 3.1.4 If these indicators are monitored over time, the resulting data can reveal trends in performance (i.e. whether something is getting better or worse). Indicator performance can also be gauged in relation to wider geographical areas (e.g. North East region) if comparable data is available. Indicator performance can also be assessed in relation to targets where these exist.
- 3.1.5 The full compilation of baseline data collected and analysed for the Borough of Darlington is contained within **Appendix 2**

#### **3.2 Task A3 – Sustainability Issues and Problems**

- 3.2.1 The identification of key sustainability issues facing the Borough of Darlington provides an opportunity to define key issues for the LDF and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options for resolving these. The identification of sustainability issues can also provide useful information to inform the SA process
- 3.2.2 The guidance emphasises that any issues identified should, where possible, be supported by evidence in the form of baseline information.
- 3.2.3 As the process of identifying the key sustainability issues for the Borough of Darlington is informed by the baseline data both will be presented in this section under the following themes:

- A Profile of the Borough of Darlington
- Darlington's Ecological Footprint
- Climate Change and Energy
- Environmental Protection
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Waste and Minerals
- Economy and Employment
- Education and Skills
- Transport and Accessibility
- People and Place
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Health and Recreation
- Culture, Heritage and Landscape
- Housing

### **3.3 Sustainability Appraisal Workshop**

3.3.1 A sustainability appraisal workshop was held on the 18th June 2009 to:

- help inform the baseline data,
- confirm the key sustainability issues for the Borough and;
- select suitable sustainability objectives

A range of internal and external stakeholders were invited to and attended the workshop. Those who were unable to attend provided their input separately. A full list of delegates is detailed in **Appendix 3**.

3.3.2 The sustainability appraisal workshops included:

- An introduction and update on Darlington's LDF and the Sustainability Appraisal process
- A discussion surrounding the issues that had been identified from the baseline data. In particular; were the issues correct and if not was there any evidence available to support the reasoning? Also what could the LDF do to help address the issues?
- A discussion to begin the development of locally relevant sustainability objectives to guide the SA framework (Part 4)

### **3.4 A Profile of the Borough of Darlington**

3.4.1 Darlington Borough is situated in North East England and is one of five unitary authorities which make up the Tees Valley sub-region, along with Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool (figure 3)



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**Fig 3 Darlington's location within the Tees Valley**

Darlington is a compact Borough with an area of 75.9 square miles with a population of just under 100,000. The market town of Darlington is the main settlement and outside the urban area there are three main villages of Heighington, Middleton St George/Middleton One Row and Hurworth/Hurworth Place, as well as service villages of Bishopton, Piercebridge, Sadberge and High Consicliffe. The remainder of the area consists of smaller villages, hamlets and open countryside. North Yorkshire lies to the south of the Borough, the Tees Valley is to the east, the former coalfield areas of County Durham to the north, and rural Teesdale to the west (figure 4). 87% of the population live within the urban centre of the Borough.



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**Fig 4 Darlington's nearest neighbours**

### **3.5 Darlington's Ecological Footprint**

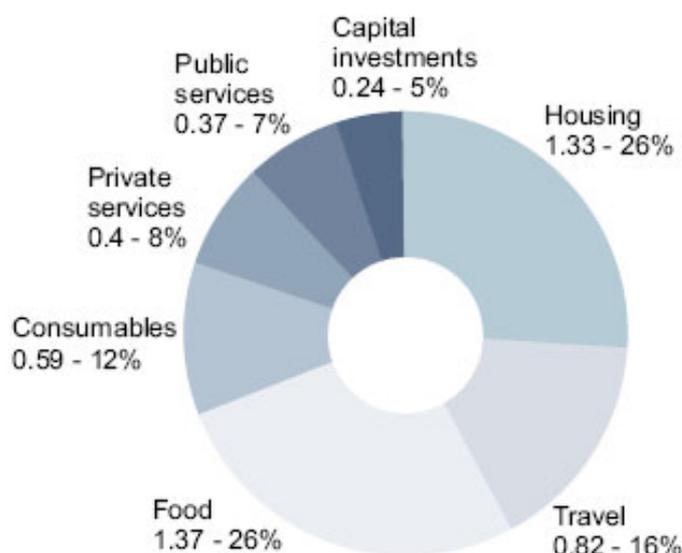
3.5.1 The ecological footprint (EF) is a measure of human demand on the Earth's resources. It compares human demand with planet Earth's ecological capacity to regenerate. It represents the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to regenerate the resources a human population consumes and to absorb and render harmless the corresponding waste. Using this assessment, it is possible to estimate how much of the Earth (or how many planet Earths) it would take to support humanity if everybody lived a given lifestyle. In order to live sustainably the world's population needs to live within a budget of 1.8 global hectares per capita. This has been calculated

by dividing the total biologically productive surface area of the planet by the current world population.

3.5.2 The EF of the UK is 5.4 gha/capita and is three times greater than the sustainable living budget. This means that if everyone lived as the UK population do we would need three planets to sustain life. The EF for the North East is 5.19 gha/capita and the Tees Valley EF is 5.12 gha/capita. Darlington's EF is currently 5.23 gha/capita<sup>6</sup> which although is less than the UK's EF is greater than the EF for the North East and for the Tees Valley. As Darlington's EF is 3.43 gha/capita above the sustainable living budget of 1.8 gha/capita it is obvious that life within Darlington is unsustainable.

3.5.3 In terms of the factors that contribute most to Darlington's unsustainable ecological footprint these can be summarised as follows:

- Food and drink contributes 26% of the overall EF. This covers spending by government and households on food and drink including catering, eating out and alcoholic beverages.
- Housing contributes 26% of the overall EF. This covers gas, electricity and fuel use in the home but also includes construction, rental and maintenance of dwellings
- Travel contributes 16% of the overall EF. This incorporates car use and maintenance, as well that of other private vehicles and public transport
- Consumables contribute 12% of the overall EF. This includes the impact of durables and non-durable items e.g., newspapers, clothing, tools and personal effects



**Fig 5 Darlington's Ecological Footprint by category**  
Source: SEI, The Tees Valley Footprint Report (2007)

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<sup>6</sup>SEI, The Tees Valley Footprint Report (2007)

### 3.5.4 Workshop response

Delegates were in agreement that Darlington’s high ecological footprint is an issue that needs to be addressed. The LDF could help to address the ecological footprint score in relation to Housing, Food and Travel. As a result, delegates would support LDF policies that encourage; local food production, a reduction in the need to travel, decentralised energy production, reduction of domestic energy use, renewable energy and developments built to BREEAM standards.

### 3.5.5 Data gaps and limitations

Delegates felt that in order to help address Darlington’s high ecological footprint it would be beneficial to understand the bearing that Darlington’s demographics have on the overall ecological footprint. For example, do wealthier residents in the Borough have a higher ecological footprint due to their ability to purchase greater volumes of consumables? Unfortunately the current ecological footprint survey for the Tees Valley (which includes Darlington) does not go into this level of detail.

### 3.5.6 Sustainability Issue

**Darlington’s residents currently consume an unsustainable proportion of the earth’s resources. Darlington’s Ecological Footprint needs to be reduced in order to meet the sustainable living budget of 1.8 gha/capita**

## 3.6 Climate Change and Energy

3.6.1 Throughout the lifetime of the planet the Earth’s climate has varied in response to natural cycles and events. However, in recent decades evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that an unprecedented rise in global temperatures has occurred over the last century or so. Scientific consensus attributes this change to emissions of greenhouse gases

3.6.2 As data is not available for all the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change Darlington’s contribution is indicated by the amount of carbon dioxide gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted in the Borough<sup>7</sup>. This is broken down into different sectors and is illustrated in table 2. All figures are in kilo-tonnes (kT) of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Table 2 Carbon Dioxide emissions in Darlington**

Industry and Commercial activity	Road Transport	Domestic	Land Use Change	Per Capita
355 (2005)	220 (2005)	261 (2005)	6 (2005)	8.53 (2005)
360 (2006)	216 (2006)	264 (2006)	4 (2006)	8.50 (2006)

3.6.3 Table 2 shows that although overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita have reduced slightly in Darlington this is not the case for all contributing sectors. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased in both the industrial and commercial and domestic sectors between 2005 and 2006. The Road transport sector and Land use change sectors have decreased their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions most notably in the Road transport sector.

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<sup>7</sup>Defra, Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> for local authority areas (2005 & 2006)

- In terms of emissions, the Industry and Commercial sector emit the most CO<sub>2</sub> in Darlington (43% of the total)
- The Domestic sector contributes 31% of the total
- Road Transport contributes 26% of the total
- Land Use change contributes 0.5% of the total

Darlington's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita are 4.23 KtCO<sub>2</sub> below the regional average of 12.73 KtCO<sub>2</sub>

3.6.4 In terms of the impacts of climate change recent projections have suggested that the North East region will get increasingly warmer with drier summers and wetter winters under a medium emissions scenario<sup>8</sup>. This could lead to the following impacts for the Borough of Darlington<sup>9</sup>.

- Increased frequency of flooding from rivers, streams and the sea
- Increased adverse health and welfare effects during warmer summers
- Increased incidents of wild fires
- Increase in pests
- Increased damage to fabric and structure of buildings from weather events
- Increased pressure on emergency services
- Loss of business / service productivity or continuity
- Increased pollution from contaminated land
- Loss of local wildlife
- Increased business opportunities associated with adaptation

3.6.5 Domestic electricity use in Darlington is above the regional average<sup>10</sup>. In 2007 electricity use was 3,856 kWh whilst in the North East consumption was 3,741kWh. Darlington's domestic gas consumption is slightly below the regional consumption of 18,292 kWh at 18,022 kWh.

3.6.6 Industrial and commercial electricity use is significantly below the regional average of 108,721 kWh at 84,338 kWh. However gas consumption is significantly higher than the regional average of 793,243 kWh at 1041,271 kWh.

3.6.7 1 in 4 households (25%) live in fuel poverty in Darlington<sup>11</sup>. This proportion is higher than the national average of 23%

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<sup>8</sup>Defra, UK Climate Change Projections (2009)

<sup>9</sup>Sustaine, North East England Climate Change Adaptation Study (2008)

<sup>10</sup>BERR, Energy Consumption Data at Local and Regional Level (2007)

<sup>11</sup>CSE, A Profile of Fuel Poverty in Tees and Durham LASP Region and Member Districts (2003)

3.6.8 The installed renewable energy capacity in Darlington is not known and there is little information regarding future capacity for renewable energy generation in the Borough. Currently, only one study exists which looked specifically at wind energy generation<sup>12</sup>. This study indicated that the Borough would be able to support a small scale wind development (i.e. 4-6 turbines) that would generate between 7.5 and 25 MW. A further study for the Borough entitled 'Decentralised and renewable or low carbon technology feasibility study' will be undertaken and published in autumn 2009.

### 3.6.9 **Workshop response**

Delegates agreed with the issues identified in relation to climate change, energy consumption, fuel poverty and renewable energy. No corrections to the baseline were suggested as a result. In relation to the LDF the sustainable location of new development was considered to be the key priority in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the associated impacts (for example not locating development in areas of flood risk, reducing the need to travel by car). In order to help biodiversity adapt to climate change, LDF policies should also consider adaptation measures for the natural environment. LDF policies should also support sustainable design of new developments to encourage energy efficiency and decentralised, renewable and low carbon technologies.

### 3.6.10 **Data gaps and limitations**

Data on the total installed renewable energy capacity and projected planning applications should be collected

### 3.6.11 **Sustainability Issues**

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Darlington are increasing particularly through Industrial and Commercial and Domestic activities. Energy consumption from non-renewable sources is greater overall than regional averages and a higher proportion of residents live in fuel poverty. Flood risk and climatic extremes are likely to increase and will impact on social, economic and environmental factors within the Borough**

## 3.7 **Environmental Protection**

3.7.1 Darlington Borough Council is responsible for air quality management. Air quality monitoring demonstrates compliance with national air quality objectives and hence the Council has not needed to designate any Air Quality Management Areas<sup>13</sup>.

3.7.2 Within the Darlington Council area, domestic / commercial heating is largely fuelled by natural gas, which gives low levels of emissions compared with other carbon based fuels. There are few large industrial processes within the Council area, and there is no significant impact from industrial sources outside of the Council area<sup>14</sup>. Currently there are five industrial processes of sufficient size that require registration with the Environment Agency for Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) and forty seven sites that are regulated under Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC)

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<sup>12</sup>ANEC: Tees Plain and East Durham Limestone Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Study (2008)

<sup>13</sup>DBC Review and Assessment of Air Quality – Updating and Screening Report (2006)

<sup>14</sup>DBC Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (2003)

- 3.7.3 In today's society traffic tends to form the principal source of air pollution. Carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOX), volatile organic compounds (VOC) and small particles (PM10) are among the pollutants emitted from vehicle exhausts. However, continuous monitoring carried out within the Darlington Council area, shows that there is unlikely to be any exceedance of government objectives, even at the most heavily congested traffic location.
- 3.7.4 Darlington Borough Council also has a duty to survey the area for possible contaminated land sites. The Council has identified approximately 1280 potentially contaminated sites. Sites are being remediated on an ongoing basis through the planning system and Part 2A Contaminated Land regime. Darlington Borough has a fairly substantial number of potentially contaminated sites due to its industrial past.
- 3.7.5 In relation to Darlington's water quality, biological river quality is below the national average at 52% of river length assessed as having 'good' biological status as opposed to the national average of 54.2%<sup>15</sup>. Under the new Water Framework Directive Assessment all rivers and tributaries have been awarded a moderate ecological potential and all those that have been assessed currently fail the Water Framework Assessment in terms of chemical quality<sup>16</sup>. The quantitative and chemical status of Darlington's groundwater is also poor and an increasing trend in rising nitrates in the catchment area has been identified. The Magnesian Limestone Aquifer which underlies the Borough and other Local Authority Areas is particularly sensitive to pollution. The target set by the Water Framework Directive is for all water bodies to obtain 'good' ecological status and chemical status by 2015. However, the Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Northumbria River Basin indicates that the target will not be met with 68% of surface water bodies in the Tees catchment achieving 'good status' by 2027. Groundwater quantitative and chemical status is also not predicted to achieve 'good status' until 2027<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.7.6 In terms of demand on water resources, daily domestic water use stands at 136 litres per capita. This is below the UK average of 154 daily litres per capita. However, increased abstraction restrictions will be put in place. The target status for the Skerne Water Resource Management Unit is for 'no water to be available' by 2014. This means that no water will be available for licensing at low flows. Water may be available at higher flows, with appropriate restrictions. The Magnesian Limestone Groundwater Management Unit will also be moving towards a 'no water available' status by 2012<sup>17a</sup>. Climate change may also increase abstraction pressures within the underlying Magnesian Limestone Aquifer, where changes in water levels and water availability may cause drought as well as flooding. As a result any increase in water abstraction, should be undertaken in full consultation with the Environment Agency to ensure that the quantitative status of the Aquifer is not compromised.

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<sup>15</sup>Audit Commission, General Quality Assessment Data (2005)

<sup>16</sup>Environment Agency, Water Framework Directive Assessment Data (2009)

<sup>17</sup>Environment Agency, Draft River Basin Management Plan: Northumbria River Basin District (2008)

<sup>17a</sup>Environment Agency, The Tees Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (2008) & The Wear Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (2006)

3.7.7 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>18</sup> has identified 132 potential sites at little or no risk from flooding, 12 sites at medium risk, 6 sites at medium to high risk and 1 site at high risk of flooding. However, the Tees model was revised in January 2008 and a number of sites may have changed category in terms of their level of flood risk as a result. A new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be published in September 2009 and should incorporate the findings of the revised Tees model. However, it is likely that flood risk in the Borough will increase as a result of climate change.

### 3.7.8 **Workshop response**

Delegates agreed that air quality in Darlington is complying with national air quality objectives and that past air pollution incidents (believed to be largely comprised of industrial bonfires) had not had a long term impact on Darlington's overall air quality. Delegates would support policies in the LDF that encourage the reduction of congestion and planting of trees to improve Darlington's air quality further.

In terms of land, delegates agreed that the number of potentially contaminated sites in Darlington is significant due to Darlington's industrial past. Delegates would support policies in the LDF that encourage opportunities for developers to remediate land. However, it was noted that developers are required to address contaminated land sites when applying for planning permission. A further suggestion included policies that support, where feasible phyto-remediation which is a long term process to remove contamination through the planting of appropriate vegetation on contaminated sites.. An additional issue in terms of land use was also raised in that the LDF should ensure that land is used in a sustainable and innovative manner.

Delegates further agreed that water quality in the Borough is an issue as is flood risk. The LDF could help to address these issues by:

- Encouraging the remediation of contaminated land as this impacts on water quality
- Encouraging buffer zones to watercourses for all types of development where possible.
- Locating development away from flood risk zones
- Encouraging the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The Environment Agency also recommends that discussions take place with other Local Planning Authorities regarding how the quantities and chemical quality of aquifers could be improved through the LDF or sub-regional planning policy. In relation to flood risk, it is recommended to consider locating playing pitches, wetlands, conservation areas and other water compatible activities on land at risk of flooding which will ensure that flood risk to people is not increased and will contribute to biodiversity enhancement objectives.

### 3.7.9 **Data gaps and limitations**

Updated data is required on the number of potential development sites in flood risk zones

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<sup>18</sup>Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2007)

### 3.7.10 Sustainability Issues

- **Darlington's air quality complies with national objectives and emissions of major air pollutants are below action levels**
- **Darlington has a significant number of potentially contaminated land sites**
- **Ecological and chemical water quality is generally poor**
- **The quantitative status of groundwater is under pressure and the Magnesian Limestone Aquifer is particularly sensitive to pollution**
- **Potential development sites are at risk of flooding. Flood risk and severity of flooding will increase due to the impacts of climate change**

### 3.8 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

3.8.1 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth at all levels, from genes to worldwide populations of the same species; from communities of species sharing the same small area of habitat to worldwide ecosystems.

3.8.2 The main threats to both local and global biodiversity are associated with human activities causing habitat loss/damage, loss of biodiversity, loss of protected species, disturbance to and pollution of ecosystems, risk to unprotected habitats and the impact of climate change.

3.8.3 Darlington Borough contains 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) including:

- Neasham Fen – designated as a Geological SSSI – Favourable condition (provides an important record of Flandrian vegetation history and environmental change)
- Hell Kettles
- Newton Ketton meadows
- Redcar Field

All sites are in a favourable or recovering condition. A total of 8.29 hectares of Darlington Borough is designated as a SSSI

3.8.4 Darlington also has 8 Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) and 3 community woodlands amounting to a total of 64 hectares (figure 6). However, Darlington falls short of the Natural England target of 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 of the population and data is required as to the condition of these sites.



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**Fig 6 Location of Darlington's LNR's and community woodlands**  
Source: Darlington Borough Council Countryside Section

3.8.5 Darlington contains the following Priority Habitats listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) <sup>19</sup> & <sup>20</sup>:

- Lowland meadows (5.1ha)
- Lowland calcareous grassland (0.6ha)
- Lowland dry acid grassland (1ha)
- Fens (1ha)
- Reedbeds (0.5ha)
- Purple moorgrass and rush pastures (0.55ha)

No data is currently available on the condition or pressures of each specific BAP habitat in Darlington

3.8.6 Darlington also hosts the following UK BAP "Priority Species" that have specific environmental protection and conservation requirements. They include<sup>21</sup>:

#### **Mammals**

Water Vole

Brown Hare

European Otter (The River Skerne remains to be fully colonised)

Pipistrelle Bat (ubiquitous in the area)

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<sup>19</sup>NE Biodiversity Forum, Biodiversity Audit of the North East (2001)

<sup>20</sup>The Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)

<sup>21</sup>NE Biodiversity Forum, Biodiversity Audit of the North East (2001)

**Birds**

Skylark  
Linnet  
Reed Bunting  
Corn Bunting  
Spotted Flycatcher  
Tree Sparrow  
Grey Partridge  
Bullfinch  
Song Thrush

**Amphibian**

Great Crested Newt

**Crustacean**

White Clawed Crayfish

Other than the information contained in the brackets above there is little data to suggest whether these species are flourishing or in decline in the Borough. Information exists at the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan area but this is not thought to be specific enough for the purposes of this report.

**3.8.7 Workshop response**

Delegates suggested that appropriate development, locations of LNR's and their accessibility are more of a priority issue for Darlington's LNR's than meeting the 1ha/1000 population target. Delegates further suggested that to aid their success, LNR's need to be located close to other natural elements such as river corridors and the LDF should bear this in mind when proposing its locational strategy.

In terms of priority species and habitats, delegates agreed that more monitoring is required to establish their condition and any positive or negative trends. The LDF could encourage the facilitation of for example, Phase 1 habitats surveys prior to determination of an application. Where a negative impact is identified, appropriate mitigation and compensation should form an integral part of the design of development, to ensure protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Darlington. The LDF should also encourage the creation of natural SuDS and habitats in general. As discussed in section 3.6.9 LDF policies should also support measures to help biodiversity adapt to the impacts of climate change.

**3.8.8 Data gaps and limitations**

Additional biodiversity data is required on the extent and condition of protected species, habitats, LNR's and non designated areas. Collection of data for National Indicator 197 which measures the proportion of local sites where active conservation management is being achieved will help to contribute to the current data gap.

**3.8.9 Sustainability issue**

**Darlington's nationally designated SSSI's are in a favourable or recovering condition and Darlington has a good range of Local Nature Reserves. However, it**

**is nationally recognised that biodiversity is under pressure from human development and climate change. At the local level there is a lack of available data on the condition and impacts on Darlington’s protected species, habitats, LNR’s and non designated areas.**

### 3.9 Waste and Minerals

3.9.1 Waste Management facilities in the Borough include one Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) on Whessoe Rd and 17 recycling bank sites (bring sites) distributed across the Borough. Darlington does not have a waste transfer station and all waste that is collected by Darlington Borough Council is transported to Aycliffe where it is either landfilled or recycled. The landfill and Materials Recycling Facility is approximately one mile outside of the Borough’s boundary.

3.9.2 Total waste produced in the Borough is decreasing (figure 7). However, overall waste collected per head of the population has increased slightly over a five year period as depicted by the trendline in figure 8. The amount of waste collected per head of population was 506 kg/head in 2006/07 which was 65kg above the national average of 441kg per head<sup>22</sup>.

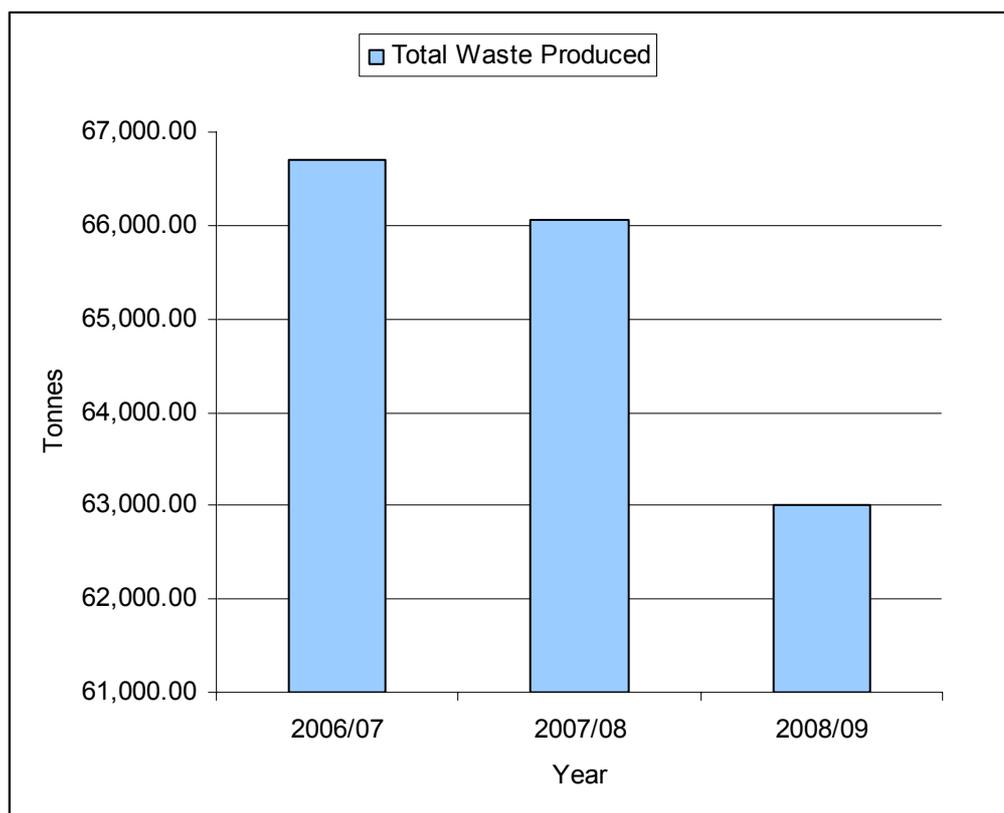


Fig 7 Chart depicting the total amount of waste produced in Darlington Borough

<sup>22</sup>Audit Commission 2006/07

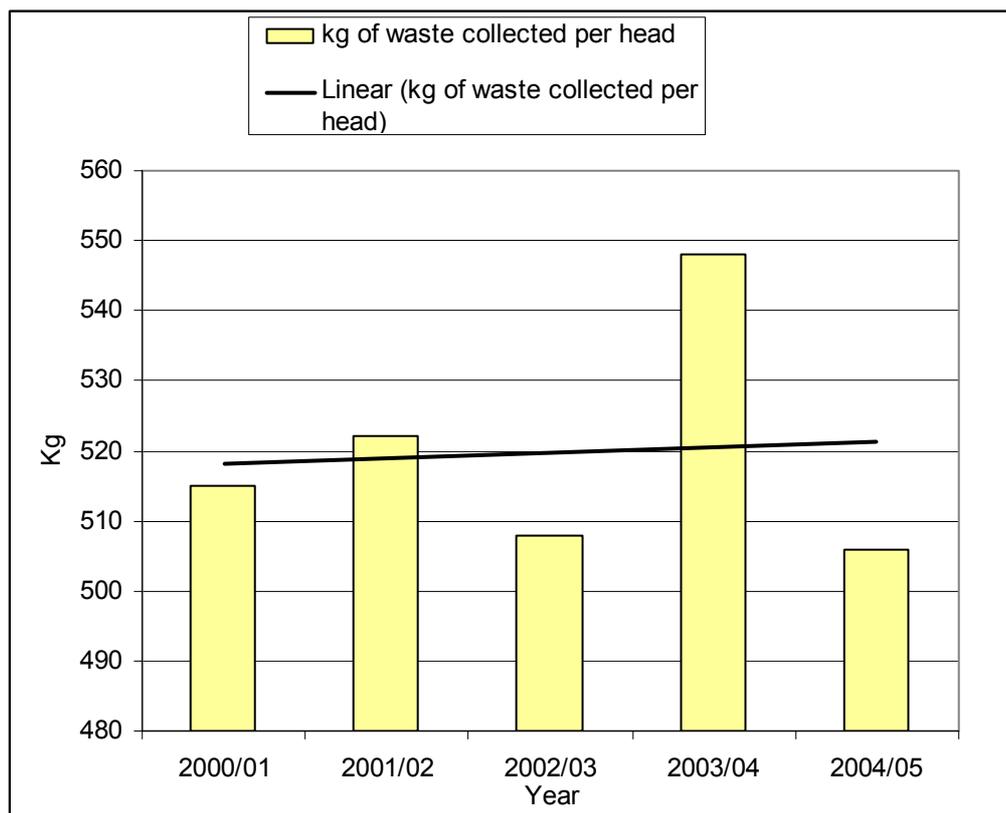


Fig 8 Chart depicting the kg of waste collected per head in Darlington Borough

3.9.3 Recycling rates of household waste are low but improving. Darlington's recycling rate has increased over the period 2006 to 2009 from 22.71% to 25.83%. An increase of 3.12% overall.<sup>23</sup> Reuse and recycling contributes 17.54% to the 2008/09 recycling rate and composting contributes 8.29%. Although recycling rates are improving Darlington will need to improve significantly to achieve the Government's recycling rate target of 40% by 2010.

3.9.4 In terms of the performance of Darlington's recycling facilities and services to the overall recycling rate their contribution has been analysed as follows:

- HWRC use contributes 49.29% to the overall recycling rate
- Kerbside recycling service contributes 43.41% to the overall recycling rate
- Bring site use contributes 4.8% to the overall recycling rate
- Charity collections contribute 2.5% to the overall recycling rate

Darlington also conducts a trade waste recycling service but these figures can not be included in the domestic recycling rate %.

3.9.5 In terms of minerals, no quarrying activities are undertaken within the Borough. However, efforts should still be made to safeguard resources.

<sup>23</sup>Waste Data Flow Data 2008/09

### 3.9.6 Workshop response

Delegates agreed that waste collected per head is higher than the national average and that levels of waste reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery is low. However, a new waste contract will become effective in autumn 2009 which should help to improve waste recycling figures. Delegates would be supportive of policies within the LDF that:

- encourage the provision of recycling and composting facilities within developments
- encourage the adoption of site waste management plans
- encourage developers to use secondary aggregates in construction

### 3.9.7 Data gaps and limitations

There is no available data on energy from waste schemes in the Borough

### 3.9.8 Sustainability issue

**The amount of waste reused, recycled and composted in the Borough is low**

## 3.10 Economy and employment

3.10.1 Darlington has historically benefited from relatively high levels of employment. With fewer major employers and a compact urban area, access to employment is good. Darlington is also an attractive location to establish a new or relocation business and is a viable location for national public sector employment

3.10.2 The public sector (public administration, education and health) is the largest employer in Darlington followed by Distribution, hotels and restaurants (figure 9). Manufacturing has declined and there is a low level of employment from high wage sectors compared to the national average<sup>24</sup>. Darlington also has a higher employment level from the construction sector than the regional and national average and there are concerns that this sector may have been negatively impacted by the economic downturn.

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<sup>24</sup>NOMIS data

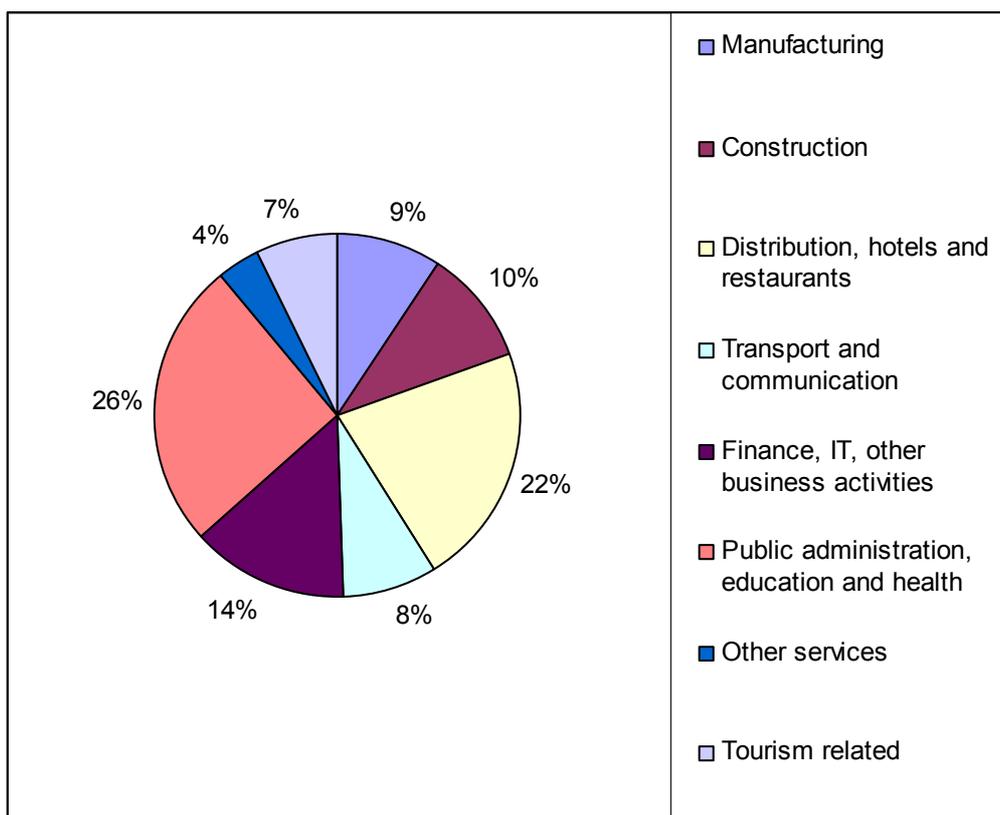


Fig 9 Employment by Industrial Sector 2007

- 3.10.3 The number of VAT registered businesses indicates the pattern of overall economic well being and the level of entrepreneurship in an area. On the basis of VAT registered activity, total activity increased by 210 registrations (9.5%) over the period 2004/07. This % increase is in line with regional figures and exceeds national figures<sup>25</sup>. However, more data will be required to establish the impact of the economic downturn on VAT registration and business start up.
- 3.10.4 60.6% of the population are economically active and this has increased slightly (despite an ageing population) over the period 2004/08. However, this is below the national average and the employment rate has declined overall by 3%.
- 3.10.5 In line with the decline in the employment rate the % of the population claiming Job Seeker's allowance (JSA) has increased by 1.6% over the period 2006/09. This rate of increase is in line with regional figures but is above national averages. It is anticipated that the % of the population claiming JSA will increase during the current economic downturn.
- 3.10.6 Despite a decrease in the employment rate and an increase in JSA claimants, average earnings have increased by £60.40 per week between 2006 and 2009. Darlington's earnings are above the regional average but significantly fall short of the national average by £40.40 per week.

<sup>25</sup>NOMIS Inter-Departmental Business Register

3.10.7 In terms of the availability of employment land the Darlington Gateway Strategy has been remarkably successful in tackling the lack of sites and premises to meet the needs of potential employers. Gateway has attracted £420 million of private sector investment into the borough to date resulting directly in the creation of over 2000 jobs<sup>26</sup>. This is evidenced by the amount of land available for development which has increased by 421.33ha over the period 2004/08<sup>27</sup>.

3.10.8 The town centre has also been improved as an important strand of the Gateway strategy. As a result the Pedestrian Heart of the town centre has now been completed. However, despite the improvements the town centre and town centre fringe has more vacant floorspace than out of town shopping centres<sup>28</sup>.

### 3.10.9 **Workshop response**

Delegates agreed with all of the issues regarding employment types, working age, employment rate, JSA claimants and earnings. However, an additional issue was identified that there is a need to narrow the gaps between deprived wards in the Borough and employment.

The LDF could help address issues relating to employment by:

- Supporting work from home and more sustainable work practices in general
- Maintaining and improving Darlington's good transport infrastructure which supports logistics
- Providing the developments necessary to encourage high wage sectors in the area such as high end engineering, creative, cultural, digital, construction and hospitality sectors whilst recognising that the public sector will need support too as this is likely to continue to be Darlington's major employer
- Encouraging development that supports the acquisition of skills in relevant growth areas

Delegates also agreed that the viability of the town centre is at threat. Certainly, a major development that would bring in more national retailers has been put on hold and there may be increased competition from internet shopping. In order to encourage people to shop in the town centre as opposed to use the internet or go elsewhere LDF policies will need to be supportive of developing Darlington as a place to visit – provision of restaurants, café's and entertainment and improvement of the night time economy i.e. shops staying open later etc.

The LDF will also need to support a balance and mix of retail types and could help to link the independent quarter with the rest of the town as this is currently annexed

The LDF could also support the development of office space that has good access to the town and its associated shopping offer as opposed to out of town office space

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<sup>26</sup>DBC One Darlington: Perfectly Placed (2008)

<sup>27</sup>DBC Annual Monitoring Reports

<sup>28</sup>DBC Retail Study (2008)

### 3.10.10 Data gaps and limitations

More data is required to gain an understanding of the predicted impacts and length of these impacts of the economic downturn on Darlington's economic performance. Further to this up to date data is required on revenue from tourism in the Borough.

### 3.10.11 Sustainability issues

**The unemployment rate is increasing and there is a low level of employment within high wage sectors. Coupled with this is the fact that there are inequalities in earnings and employment across the Borough and the population is ageing.**

**(Please refer to section 3.13) This is likely to decrease the proportion of the population that are economically active in time**

**The vitality and viability of the town centre will require protection in order to compete effectively with other shopping experiences**

## 3.11 Education and Skills

3.11.1 There are 10 nurseries, 3 Infant and junior schools, 24 primary schools, 7 secondary schools, 3 independent schools and 2 colleges within the Borough. Despite the range and number of educational establishments demand for state school education outstripped supply in 2008<sup>29</sup>.

3.11.2 There is an increasing level of school educational achievement with 47% of 16 year olds achieving 5 A\* to C grades including Maths and English. However, this rate is below the national average of 49.1% in 2007/08<sup>30</sup>.

3.11.3 Unfortunately, despite an increase in educational achievement there has been an increase in the % of 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment. The current rate (6.9%) is slightly above the national average of 6.7%<sup>31</sup>.

3.11.4 In terms of the working age population the % without qualifications is decreasing and performance is currently better than the regional and national picture. Darlington's population is also on average more qualified than the regional and national average population with a greater % of Darlington's population qualified to a level 4<sup>32</sup>.

3.11.5 Despite a qualified population employers have reported a greater skills gap than the regional and national average<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup>DBC Primary and Secondary School Admissions Guide 2009/10

<sup>30</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI175 (2008/09)

<sup>31</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI117 (2008/09)

<sup>32</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI163, 164 and 165 (2008/09)

<sup>33</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI174 (2007/08)

### 3.11.6 **Workshop response**

Delegates agreed that the shortfall of school places is an issue largely due to rising birth rates. Delegates also agreed that academic performance in the Borough is below the national average and that the % of 16-18yr olds not in education, training or employment is increasing. Delegates further identified that there are gaps in educational attainment and school performance across the Borough. Delegates also felt that the increasing skills gap could be as a result of qualification not fitting current employment types within the Borough. There is also an increasing gap in educational attainment

Delegates would be supportive of LDF policies that contribute to Darlington's aspiration to become a university town as this may help to address some of the educational issues in the Borough. Life long learning opportunities should also be supported and provision of facilities for this should be designed into new educational developments.

### 3.11.7 **Data gaps and limitations**

None identified

### 3.11.8 **Sustainability Issues**

**There is a shortfall in school places across the Borough and as a result more schools are needed.**

**School age educational achievement varies across the Borough and current performance is below the national average**

**There is a mismatch of qualifications to available employment in the Borough as indicated by a high skills gap**

## 3.12 **Transport and Accessibility**

3.12.1 Sustainable transport is key to the wider sustainable development agenda. An efficient transport network is a pre-requisite of a successful modern economy. A safe and accessible transport network helps fulfil societal objectives, while an energy efficient and low-pollution transport network is essential to safeguard the environment and climate.

3.12.2 Good transport links exist with the A1 (M) crossing the west of the Borough and other key roads and railways linking the Borough to the remainder of the North East and Yorkshire. The Durham Tees Valley airport is in the southern part of the Borough. However, 'good' transport links and infrastructure can result in high numbers of trips being generated which could impact on air quality, climate change and the overall operation of the Strategic Road Network.

3.12.3 In terms of travel patterns within the Borough a higher % of Darlington's population use a car to get to work than the national average<sup>34</sup>. The main mode of transport for getting to work is also the car (figure 10).

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<sup>34</sup>ONS, Census Method of Travel to Work –Resident Population (2006)

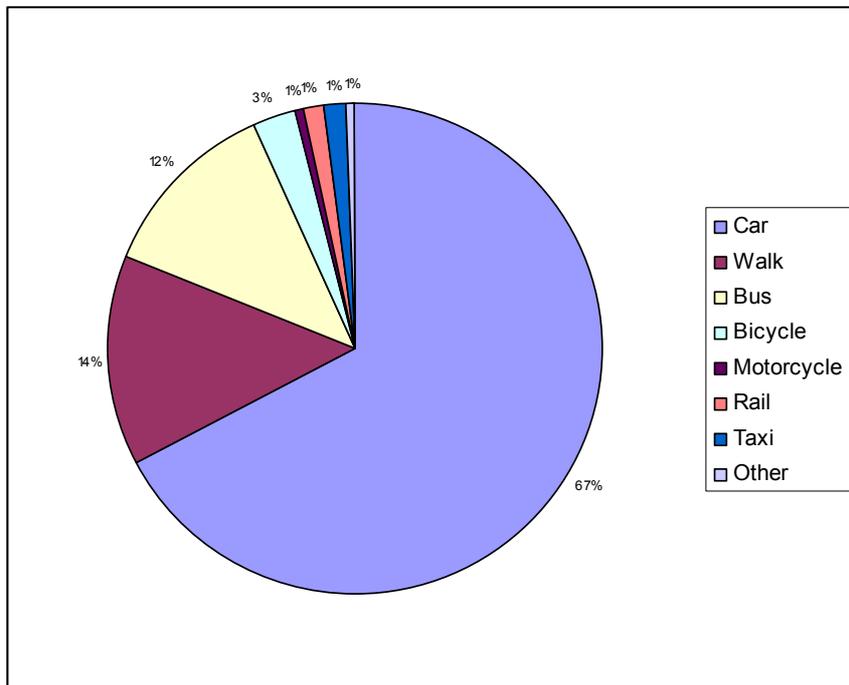


Fig 10 Mode of travel used to travel to work, 2006

3.12.4 These figures are disappointing considering that a higher percentage of the population need to travel less than a mile to get to work (figure 11)<sup>35</sup>.

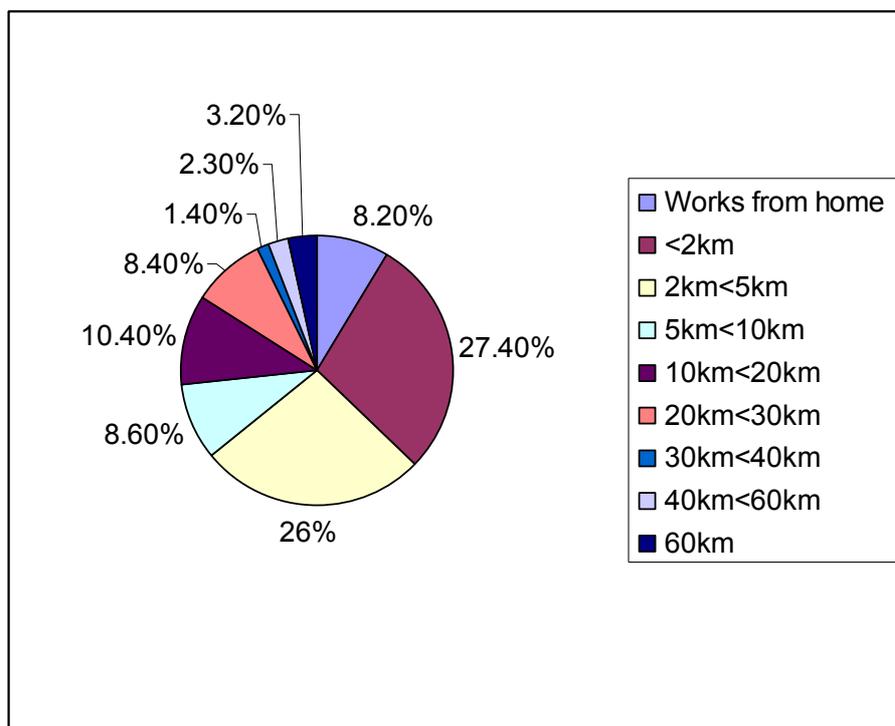
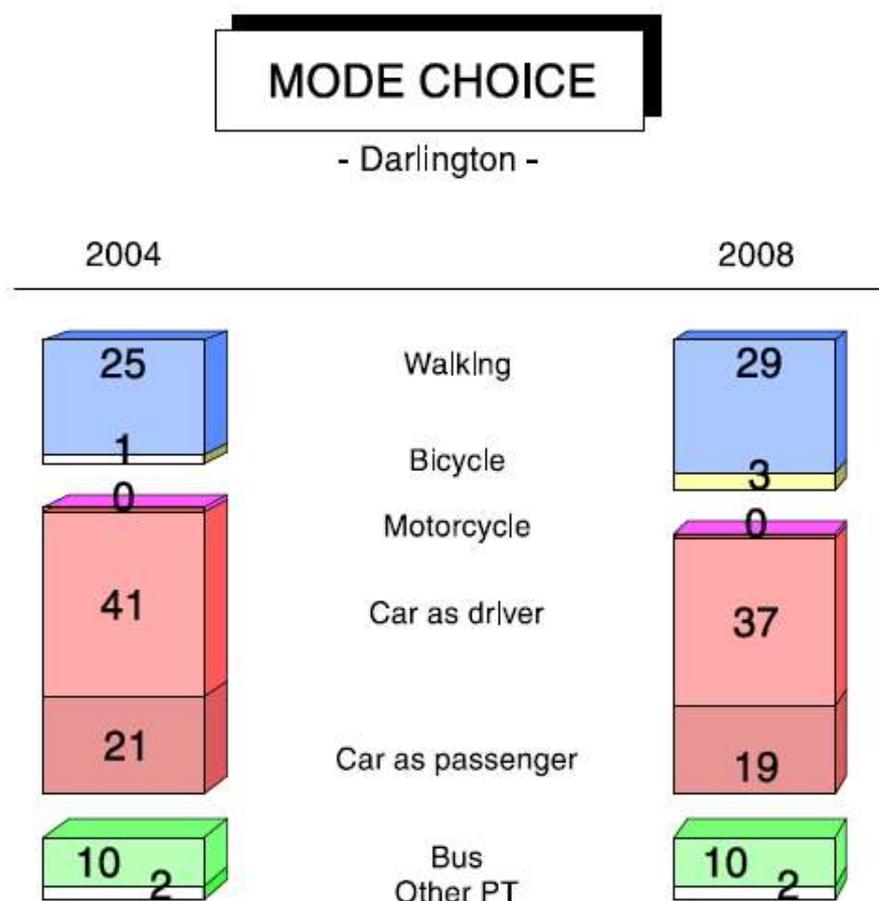


Fig 11 Distance travelled to work, 2006

<sup>35</sup>ONS, Distance travelled to work (2006)

- 3.12.5 Darlington is a compact Borough and it is not just jobs that are accessible as National Indicator data shows that 94% of the population are also able to access services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling<sup>36</sup>.
- 3.12.6 In April 2004, Darlington was selected by the Department for Transport (DfT) as one of three Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns (STDTs) to showcase the role of 'smarter choices' measures in reducing car use<sup>37</sup>. The project was entitled 'Local Motion'
- 3.12.7 Figure 12 illustrates the results of the project in terms of reducing car use and encouraging the take up of other forms of transport in the town of Darlington:



**Fig 12 Changes in % of trips by main mode**

Source: DBC Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town, Travel Behaviour Research (2009)

- 3.12.8 Figure 12 expresses the changes in mode choice in terms of trips per person per year, and the relative changes between 2004 and 2008. The figure shows that walking and cycling have increased and use of a car as a driver and as a passenger has decreased. There has been no change in bus or other public transport choice as a result of the project.
- 3.12.9 Despite the improvements that the Local Motion Project has made to change behaviour in favour of more sustainable transport modes the car is still the greater mode choice.

<sup>36</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI175 (2007/08)

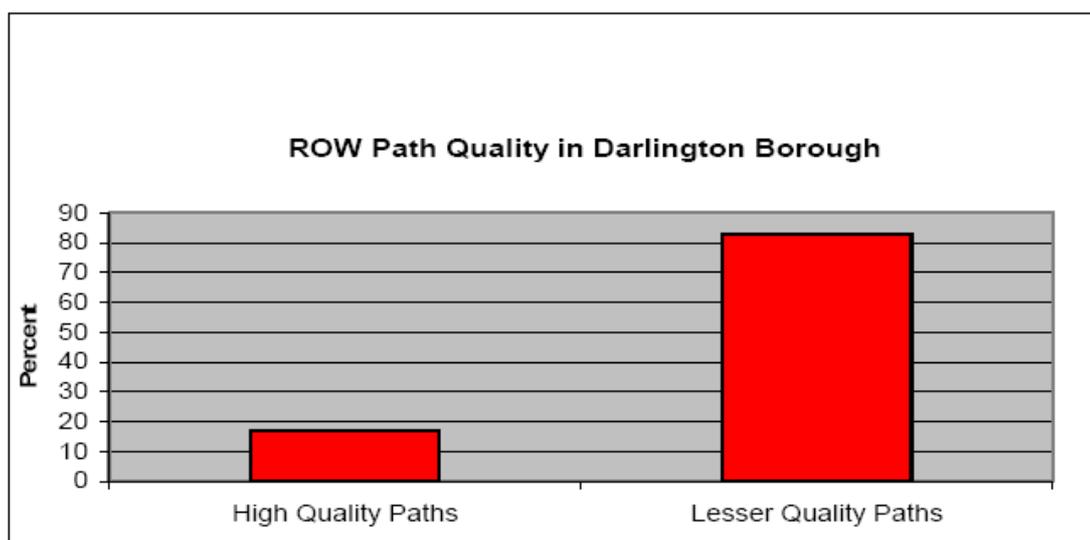
<sup>37</sup>DBC Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town, Travel Behaviour Research (2009)

3.12.10 As a result, there is a need to continue the good work of the Local Motion Project in changing people's travel behaviour. However, in order to gain the most positive impacts and long lasting behavioural change in favour of sustainable travel in the Borough the infrastructure that supports walking and cycling such as the public rights of way network will need to be of high quality and linked to the wider transport network.

3.12.11 In terms of the public rights of way network Darlington Borough has just over 300km of Public Rights of Way (PROW) of which approximately 30km are located within the town of Darlington itself<sup>38</sup>. Many of the surrounding villages have good networks of Public Rights of Way both around the villages themselves and linking them with neighbouring settlements and the main urban area of Darlington. There are several important historic routes that run through the Borough including the old Salters' Lane, used for centuries to transport salt from Hartlepool to North Yorkshire, and the original Great North Road stagecoach route. Some of the old railway track bed that was the route of the original 1825 Stockton to Darlington Railway, the first passenger railway in the world is also, now a bridleway, as are other dismantled railways that once served Darlington's rich railway past.

3.12.12 There are several identified issues in relation to Darlington's PROW network which may hinder sustainable forms of travel. These are as follows:

- The North and East of the Borough is well served with public bridleways although they sometimes don't link up as well as they could
- The West of the Borough has the A1 (M) motorway as a major problem to overcome as it distracts from the enjoyment of the network both visually and because of the noise aspect
- To the South and East of the town the ROW network is dominated by the A66 which severs the network completely
- In the more remote parts of the Borough there is good coverage but very low use
- There is a low % of high quality paths in the Borough as shown by figure 13



**Fig 13 Path quality in Darlington Borough**

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<sup>38</sup>DBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan

### 3.12.13 Workshop response

There was uncertainty as to whether the main mode of transport in Darlington is the car. However, figure 12 from recent travel behaviour research verifies this as correct. In terms of the LDF, delegates would support policies that ensure that developments are located and designed to encourage use of sustainable travel modes. Developments should also have good links to the transport network.

### 3.12.14 Data gaps and limitations

Further congestion (NI 167) data is required to establish whether traffic congestion is an issue in Darlington. Delegates suggested that congestion is only an issue at peak times in particular localities.

### 3.12.15 Sustainability Issue

**Despite the relative accessibility of workplaces, services and facilities in the Borough, Darlington's main mode of transport is the car.**

## 3.13 People and Place

3.13.1 The majority of residents (79%) are satisfied with Darlington as a place to live and this is improving<sup>39</sup>. The physical environment is attractive, comfortable, accessible and green. The place has a friendly atmosphere and many people cherish its 'Market town' character<sup>40</sup>.

3.13.2 However, there are some clear social issues that need to be addressed within the Borough. The key issues that cross cut all social issues within the Borough include:

- Deprivation and inequalities across the Borough
- An increasingly ageing population

3.13.3 Darlington is ranked as the 95th most deprived area in the country, with 45% of the population living in 10 wards that amongst the 25% most deprived in the country. Seven wards are amongst the 10% most deprived and 31% of the borough's population live in them<sup>41</sup>. Inequalities largely relate to educational achievement, employment, health and public realm

3.13.4 Darlington's age profile indicates an increasing ageing population, with particular increases in those aged 75-85+ (figure 14). An increase of 4,200 residents aged 75-85+ is forecast between 2009 (8,300) and 2026 (12,500)<sup>42</sup>. The overall population (all ages) is set to increase by 11,500, from 101,000 in 2009 to 112,500 in 2026.

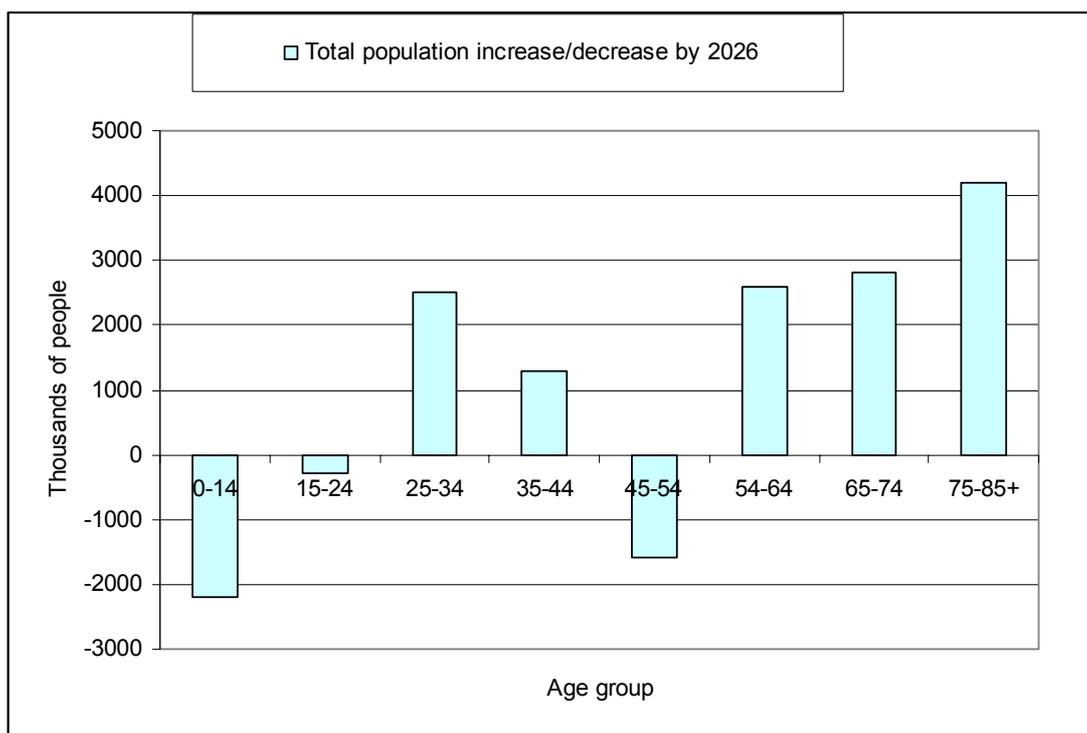
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<sup>39</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI5 (2008/09)

<sup>40</sup>DBC One Darlington: Perfectly Placed (2008)

<sup>41</sup>Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2007)

<sup>42</sup>ONS, 2006 based sub national population projections



**Fig 14 Changes to Age profile to 2026**

### 3.13.5 Workshop response

Delegates agreed that the issues of deprivation, inequalities and an ageing population need addressing in the Borough. A future issue will be access to more local services for older, less mobile people, daytime and evening. The LDF will need to make existing facilities multi-purpose where possible.

### 3.13.6 Data gaps and limitations

None identified

### 3.13.7 Sustainability issue

**Significant inequalities exist between the most deprived and least deprived wards**

**Darlington’s population is ageing and the retention of young people in the Borough is a growing concern.**

## 3.14 Safer and Stronger Communities

3.14.1 80% of the population believe that people of different backgrounds get on well together in Darlington which is a good indicator of social cohesiveness and integration<sup>43</sup>. However, the percentage of people who feel that they can influence decision in their locality is low at 29.7%<sup>44</sup>. This may impact on community involvement and participation in the Borough.

<sup>43</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI1 (2008/09)

<sup>44</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI4 (2008/09)

3.14.2 Crime in the Borough has decreased by nearly a quarter (22.6%) over the period 2005/09 and has consistently decreased in all wards within the Borough with the exception of one rural and three urban wards in the period 2006/09 which have shown a slight increase<sup>45</sup>. Overall however, the Borough's crime rate (59.2%) is slightly above national (54%) and regional averages (52.9%) as of 2007/08<sup>46</sup>. In terms of crime, a greater rate took place in urban wards as opposed to rural wards in the Borough in 2008/09. Of the urban wards the most crime took place in the town centre in 2008/09 and overall a greater proportion of crime took place in the more deprived urban wards as opposed to less deprived urban wards.

3.14.3 The percentage of residents who feel safe whilst outside at night has improved by 10.4% in the period 2002/09<sup>47</sup>. However, more recently there has been a slight decline of 1.7% between 2007/09. The percentage of residents who feel safe whilst outside during the day has improved by 5.9% in the period 2002/09. The % has also increased slightly between 07/08 and 08/09.

#### 3.14.3 **Workshop response**

Delegates were in broad agreement with the issues raised although the comment was made that crime is largely concentrated within the urban centre of the Borough. No suggestions as to how the LDF could address the issues were put forward.

#### 3.14.4 **Data gaps and limitations**

None identified

#### 3.14.5 **Sustainability Issues**

**The majority of residents (70%) do not feel able to influence decisions**

**Total crime is decreasing in the Borough but the overall crime rate is higher than regional and national averages**

### 3.15 **Health and Recreation**

3.15.1 Male and female life expectancy is increasing but is below the regional and national averages<sup>48</sup>. The average life expectancy for males is 75.2 years which is below the regional average of 75.8 and the national average of 77.3. The average life expectancy of females is 80 years which is below the regional average of 80.1 and the national average of 81.5. In terms of inequalities in health in the Borough there is a reported 13 year difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>DBC Ward Level Crime (2008/09)

<sup>46</sup>Floors Interactive website (2007/08)

<sup>47</sup>DBC Policy Department local indicators (2008/09)

<sup>48</sup>ONS Life expectancy at birth (2006)

<sup>49</sup>DBC One Darlington: Perfectly Placed (2008)

3.15.2 The general health of the population of Darlington shows positive trends in some areas. Infant mortality and early deaths from circulatory disease and cancer have decreased but are still above the national average as depicted by figure 15<sup>50</sup>

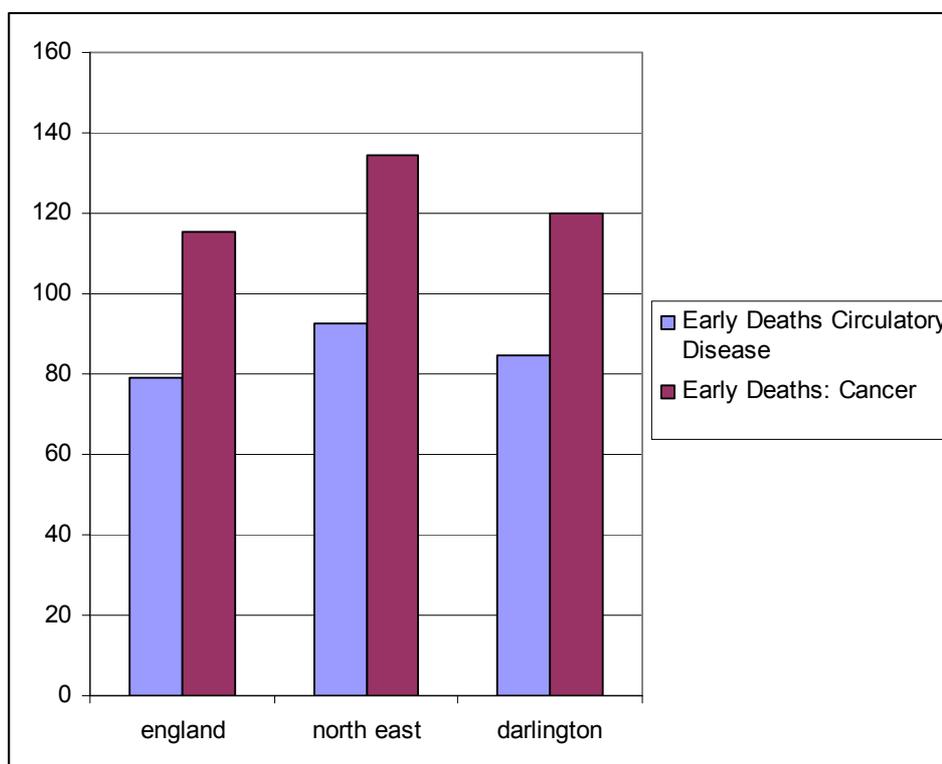


Fig 15 Comparison of early deaths from circulatory disease and cancer

3.15.3 In terms of lifestyle, this can be summarised as follows<sup>51</sup>:

- There has been an increase in number of smokers quitting but this figure is below the national average
- There has been a decrease in obesity amongst primary school children but this is still significantly above the national figures
- Binge drinking in Darlington is significantly above the national average
- There has been an increase in diabetes which is above national averages
- There has been an increase in teenage pregnancies (under 18). Current figures Are significantly above the national average

3.15.4 In relation to participation in sport, 94% of young people have the opportunity to participate in high quality PE and sport<sup>52</sup>. However, adult participation is somewhat lower as just over a quarter (26.6%) currently participate in sport and active recreation<sup>53</sup>. This is however, in line with national trends. The % of the population using Darlington's right of way network for walking, cycling or horse riding is also very low (less than 5%)<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>50</sup>Floors Interactive website (2005/07)

<sup>51</sup>NHS Darlington: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2008)

<sup>52</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI57 (2007/08)

<sup>53</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI8 (2008/09)

<sup>54</sup>DBC Right's of Way Improvement Plan

3.15.5 Participation in sport may be linked to the availability and quality of recreation and sports facilities. Darlington currently has a good provision of swimming pools, indoor bowls, athletic track lanes, golf courses, gyms and sports and community halls. However, Darlington has a low provision of synthetic turf pitches, specialist indoor facilities, multi use games areas, tennis courts and specialist outdoor facilities<sup>55</sup>. There is also an identified shortfall of 18 junior playing pitches in the Borough<sup>56</sup>.

### 3.15.6 **Workshop response**

Unfortunately, a health representative was unable to attend the workshop so delegates were unable to provide any verification on the identified health issues. In relation to recreation delegates provided the following comments:

Additional synthetic turf pitches are required in the Borough as are indoor cricket pitches. The provision of specialist indoor facilities and multi-use games areas is not an issue but access to them is. Maintenance and quality of outdoor bowling greens is also felt to be an issue as they are generally only used on a seasonal basis.

There are enough adult playing pitches in the Borough but these are currently being shared with junior users. This has implications for the quality of the adult pitches as they are not getting enough rest. This issue could be resolved in part if schools were willing to let their playing fields be used for community use. 50% of schools playing fields are currently not used by the community. There is also an issue regarding a lack of changing facilities. Strategically located hub sites in the Borough could be considered

Clearly LDF policies that support recreational development where there is an identified shortfall and encourage community use agreements would be welcomed.

### 3.15.7 **Data gaps and limitations**

None identified

### 3.15.8 **Sustainability issues**

**Overall life expectancy is below national averages and despite some positive health and lifestyle trends Darlington's performance is consistently below national averages. There are also significant ward level variations in health inequality**

**Identified shortfall in provision of some types of recreational facilities and low levels of adults participating in sport**

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<sup>55</sup>DBC Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy (2009)

<sup>56</sup>DBC Playing Pitch Strategy (2009)

### **3.16 Culture, Heritage and Landscape**

- 3.16.1 Participation in cultural activities for example, visits to museums, engagement in arts, film etc is important for social wellbeing, education and enhancing community identity. Currently less than half of the population (49.7%) take part in cultural activities<sup>57</sup>.
- 3.16.2 The Borough has a wealth of historic areas, buildings and features reflecting its railway history, Quaker heritage and roman and medieval legacy. Buildings within the urban centre of Darlington are predominantly Victorian with some buildings from the Georgian era.
- 3.16.3 Overall, there are 8 Grade I, 31 Grade II\* and 478 Grade II listed buildings in the borough. Of these listings 1 Grade I, 5 Grade II\* and 18 Grade II buildings are on the Buildings at Risk Register<sup>58</sup>. The condition of the buildings at risk are predominantly classified as in a vulnerable condition (42%) as opposed to at extreme risk (23%). Only 5 heritage assets at risk are currently undergoing restoration. However, the overall number of granted applications for listed building consent has increased by 19% over the period 2005/09<sup>59</sup>. This could indicate that awareness of the planning process in relation to listed buildings and their quality in the Borough is improving. This assumption has been made and verified with Darlington Borough Council's Conservation Officer as applications are largely only granted if they have a positive impact on the building.
- 3.16.4 Listed buildings do not however, provide the full picture of the condition of Darlington's heritage. There are also numerous historic but unlisted buildings at risk. Darlington Borough Council is in the process of establishing a record of locally important buildings. However, until this is complete locally important buildings could be at a higher risk of inappropriate development or other pressures.
- 3.16.5 There are 598 sites of local and regional significance on the Sites and Monuments Register<sup>60</sup> and 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM's)<sup>61</sup>. Darlington has the second highest number of SAM's in the Tees Valley although the density is below the North East average<sup>62</sup>. 2 SAM's are at risk and a recent audit shows that improvements are needed in particular to the accessibility (where feasible) and provision of interpretation at scheduled monuments<sup>63</sup>.
- 3.16.6 In relation to Darlington's railway heritage, 14 assets are listed of which 21% are on the risk register. These assets include:
- North Road Railway Station
  - Former Goods Shed, Station Road
  - 138-148 North gate (home of Edward Pease and where he met George Stephenson to discuss the Stockton and Darlington Railway)
- Considering the importance of Darlington's' railway heritage (the world's first public railway) this is a worrying proportion<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> DBC Policy Department data on NI10 and NI11 (2008/09)

<sup>58</sup> DBC Buildings at Risk Register (2008)

<sup>59</sup> DBC Record of listed building consent

<sup>60</sup> Durham County Council Keys to the Past website (2009)

<sup>61</sup> DBC SAM's record (2009)

<sup>62</sup> English Heritage, Monuments at Risk, North East (2009)

<sup>63</sup> DBC Scheduled Monuments Audit (2009)

<sup>64</sup> DBC Buildings at Risk Register (2008)

3.16.7 Darlington Borough has 17 conservation areas in total, 9 of which have character appraisals. 1 conservation area is classified as being at risk<sup>65</sup>. Recorded threats within the character appraisals include:

- Loss of buildings from the key periods of the area's development
- Unsympathetic design of newer buildings
- Damage to the character of surviving buildings (façade etc)
- Loss of traditional features such as sash windows, cast iron rainwater goods etc
- Cluttered streetscapes
- High levels of traffic in some areas
- Vacant/disused and overgrown land

3.16.8 A further threat to Darlington's heritage and historic environment is that of climate change. Direct impacts have been identified as follows<sup>66</sup>:

- Heightened risk of ground subsidence and decay of stonework due to increased extremes of wetting and drying
- Erosion of archaeological sites and damaging flooding in historic settlements due to more frequent intense rainfall
- Changes in hydrology that put buried archaeological remains at risk
- Design integrity of historic buildings and landscapes by the need to provide new or more effective rainwater disposal or flood protection measures

3.16.9 Darlington's landscape largely falls within the Natural England classification of the Tees Lowlands<sup>67</sup>. Key characteristics that are relevant to the Borough include:

- A low-lying plain of gently undulating, predominantly arable farmland, with some pasture, and wide views to distant hills.
- Meandering, slow moving river Tees flows through the heart of the area
- Contrast of quiet rural areas with urban development
- Overhead transmission lines and pylons, motorway corridors, railway lines and other infrastructure elements are widespread features.
- Woodland cover is generally sparse,
- Minor valleys and linear strips of open land extend as "green corridors" from rural farmland into the heart of the Teesside conurbation.

The threats to the Tees Lowlands include:

- Hedgerow removal and the loss of meadows and pasture through agricultural Intensification
- Recreational development near to urban areas e.g. golf courses

A further historic landscape characterisation study that includes the Borough is currently underway and is due for completion in 2011.

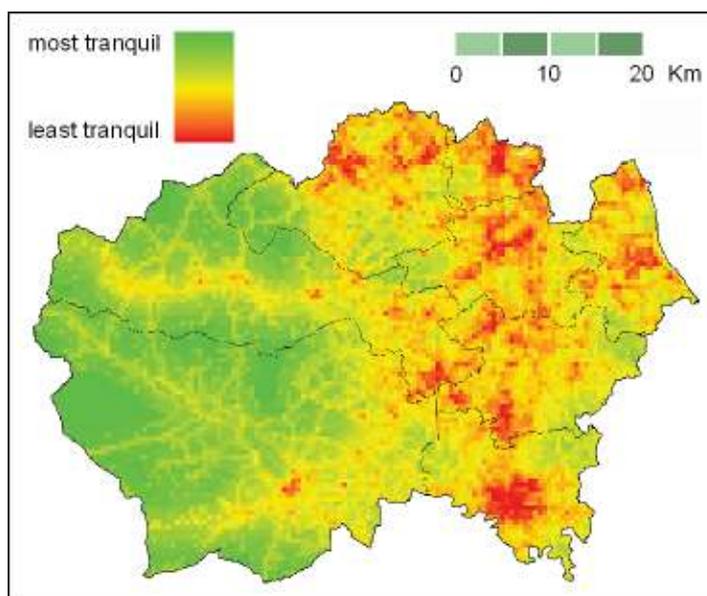
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<sup>65</sup>English Heritage, Conservation Areas at Risk (2009)

<sup>66</sup>English Heritage, Climate Change and the Historic Environment (2008)

<sup>67</sup>Natural England, National Character Areas (2009)

3.16.10 Darlington's landscape has a direct correlation with residents and visitors experiences of tranquillity. Tranquillity is difficult to describe and can be different to different people but largely includes a sense of peace and quiet and a feeling of 'getting away from it all'. Tranquillity is an important contributing factor to quality of life and mental and physical wellbeing<sup>68</sup>. It is also crucial to rural economies. Darlington Borough is the most tranquil of the Tees Valley authorities and is ranked 39th out of 87 authority areas in the Country. However, there are clear disparities in tranquillity between urban and rural areas in the borough as depicted in Figure 16 (Darlington Borough is at the bottom right hand side of the map).



**Fig 16 County Durham Tranquillity Map, 2006**  
**Source:** Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) 2009

- 3.16.11 The amount of open space and quality of the public realm within the Borough also has an impact on landscape character, local environmental quality, quality of life and opportunity to experience tranquillity.
- 3.16.12 The local environmental quality of the Borough is good. The Cleanliness NI195 data reports that unacceptable levels of litter, detritus, and graffiti are below the national average at 8% (litter), 9% (detritus) and 0% (graffiti). However, levels of flyposting have increased and are above the national average by 1%<sup>69</sup>
- 3.16.13 Darlington has a high level of open space for a Borough of its size with a total of 923ha<sup>70</sup>. 859ha of which is in the main urban area and is within a 300 metre walk for 99% of the population. Open space within the Borough contributes positively to landscape character, the wider green infrastructure network and provides opportunities for recreation. The majority (72%) of open space within Darlington is of high value but several issues have been identified:

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<sup>68</sup>CPRE, Tranquillity and tranquillity mapping (2009)

<sup>69</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI195 (2008/09)

<sup>70</sup>DBC, Open Spaces Strategy (2006-2011)

- Poor provision in some parts of the Borough (Largely the West end of the town)
- Marked differences in the quality of open space depending on where residents live
- Geographical gaps in the provision of specific types of open space
- Evolving open space needs of an ageing population
- Need for protection and enhancement of open spaces within villages

3.16.14 Coupled with informal areas of open space Darlington Borough has 12 public parks and gardens. The South Park is of particular note as it is the oldest public park in the NE and has been awarded green flag status.

#### 3.16.15 **Workshop response**

Delegates felt that participation in cultural activities in the Borough is an issue. Darlington has lost a museum and an art gallery and many people do not see the historic environment that forms the back drop to their daily lives as culture. The LDF could assist with this issue by supporting policies that would encourage greater awareness and interaction with cultural assets. The LDF could also encourage the range of cultural activities on the offer through supporting the development of a distinct cultural quarter in the town.

Delegates further agreed that there has been an increase in heritage at risk and a low proportion of at risk heritage undergoing restoration. This situation may also worsen in the next 3-5 years due to the economic downturn. The LDF could help to address this situation by including robust policies within the Core Strategy and by including a Historic Environment SPD that would contain locally distinctive policies in the Local Development Scheme.

Delegates agreed that work should be undertaken to compile a list of locally important buildings. The LDF should in turn support the creation of local lists.

Delegates felt that the access to (and if this is not feasible or appropriate) the interpretation of SAM's is an issue in the Borough. The Core Strategy should recognise the importance of SAM's and support the interpretation and appropriate access to them.

Delegates agreed that Darlington's railway heritage is at risk and given Darlington's railway history believe that all railway assets should be brought up to and maintained in a good condition. Delegates also felt that Darlington's railway heritage needs to be respected and promoted more. Robust Core Strategy Policies and a Historic Environment SPD could address this issue.

Delegates agreed that threats exist to the Borough's conservation areas although these vary depending on which conservation area is in question. There needs to be sound policies within the Core Strategy regarding conservation areas and the protection of their unique settings and features that exist within them.

In terms of landscape quality delegates felt that there are inequalities in the quality of the public realm within Darlington. This could be addressed through policies that support landscape mitigation and enhancement. Industrial sites on the urban fringe are in

particular need of landscaping. Habitat mitigation could also be explored and supported through the LDF.

On the issues surrounding open space, delegates clarified that in the West end of the town there is poor provision but what there is, is of high quality. However, in the East end of the Borough there is plenty of provision but quality is an issue. A comment was also made that the East end of the town is largely where commercial developments are located so there is a potential threat to the provision in the East. Delegates further identified that there is a lack of natural space in the urban centre that can be deemed as of public ownership. The current parks in the Borough tend to attract different groups of people and a park or area of natural space that was accessible and attractive to all would help to improve quality of life and opportunity to experience tranquillity in the urban centre. The LDF should support opportunities for the creation of natural space in the urban centre and should improve the quality of strategic sites. The LDF should also recognise the important contribution the open space makes to the green infrastructure network and protect it accordingly

### 3.16.16 **Data gaps and limitations**

The historic landscape characterisation study will need to be included in the baseline when available. A local landscape characterisation assessment for the Borough has not been undertaken.

### 3.16.17 **Sustainability issues**

**Participation, provision and awareness of cultural assets and activities in the Borough needs to be supported by the LDF.**

**Darlington's heritage and historic environment requires adequate protection and promotion through LDF policies.**

**Darlington's local landscape and historic character requires protection from inappropriate and cumulative development.**

**Disparities in the quality of public realm and open space exist.**

## 3.17 **Housing**

- 3.17.1 The percentage of owner occupied (76%) housing in Darlington is higher than the North East and English averages and the average household size in 2001 was 2.27, below the national average of 2.36<sup>71</sup>. This is largely attributable to Darlington's elderly population which causes an issue in terms of providing sufficient appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of a significant growing retired population. Most older people want to remain in their home, but there is interest in sheltered accommodation and buying an apartment in a specific older persons development, as well as strong demand for bungalows<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup>ONS (2001)

<sup>72</sup>DBC, Older Persons Strategy (2007)

3.17.2 However, Darlington Borough Council and other housing agencies will need to consider the needs of all. The TVSHMA found that population growth in the Borough is underpinned by natural change (births minus deaths), internal migration within the Tees Valley, in-migration from County Durham and North Yorkshire and international in-migration. The biggest areas of growth are expected to be in the numbers of older people and working age people<sup>73</sup>.

3.17.3 Further to meeting the housing needs of an ageing population and those of working age Darlington is identified as having a key role in attracting and retaining migrants in the region and sub-region. Current and anticipated future housing provision does not match the aspirations of wealthy and skilled in-migrants, whom the Borough wants to attract to support its economic aspirations. This group's aspirations are towards larger properties, even though demographics indicate more single person households. Also, development in the planning pipeline comprises a high proportion of one and two bed apartments, whereas higher income in-migrants want to own or occupy three or more bedroom detached houses.

The delivery of additional housing will need to be balanced with outstanding permissions so that future housing development meets housing needs, aspirations and diversifies the housing on offer to help support and contribute to economic growth. It will be particularly important to ensure that the needs and aspirations of in-migrant households are met.

3.17.4 As a result of anticipated growth, land for new homes needs to be identified. The number of new homes that may be built is controlled by the housing allocation from the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East<sup>74</sup>. The RSS has indicated that 3550 new homes should be built in Darlington between 2004 and 2021. However, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies a total shortfall of 804 dwellings against this requirement<sup>75</sup>. This is largely due to the impacts of the economic downturn. The most recent figures on the number of homes provided shows a significant shortfall against the RSS requirement of 525 houses per annum occurring in 2008/09 (figure 17)<sup>76</sup>.

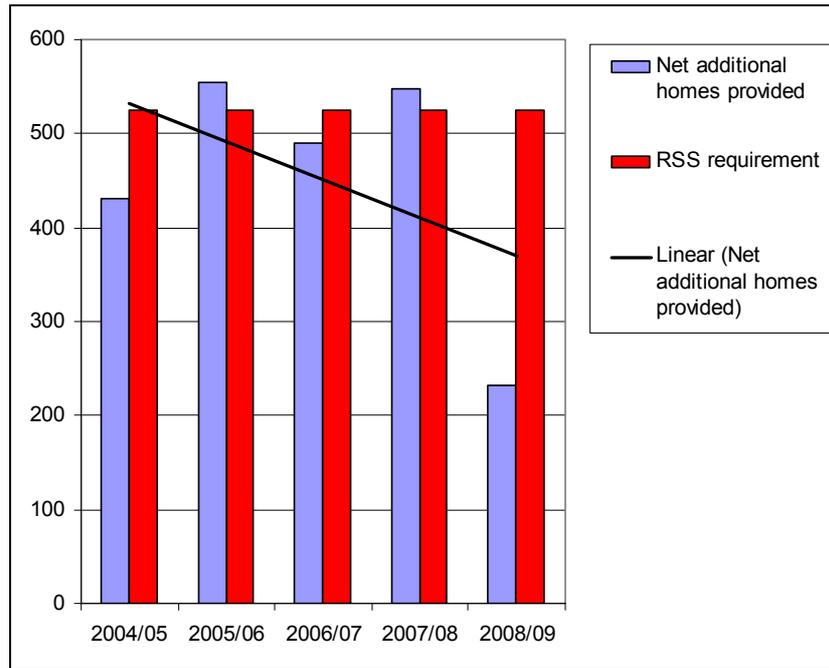
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<sup>73</sup>Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009

<sup>74</sup>The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021

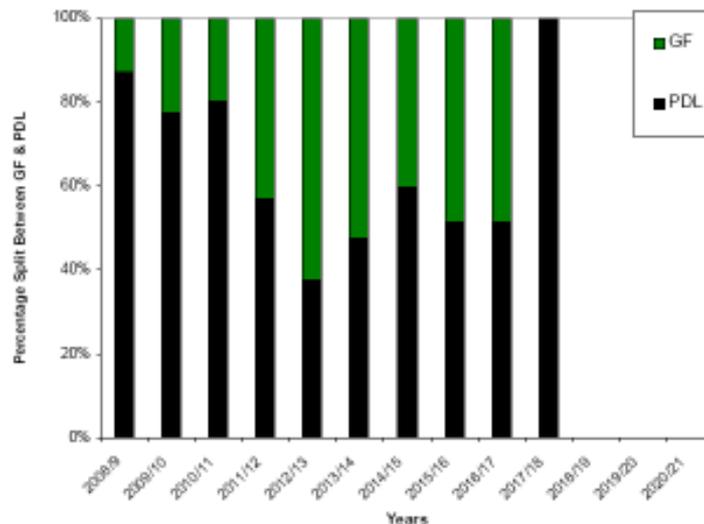
<sup>75</sup>DBC, SHLAA (2009)

<sup>76</sup>DBC Policy Department data on NI154 (2008/09)



**Fig 17 Net additional homes provided against RSS requirements**

3.17.5 The Government target, as outlined in PPS3, is for 60% of new housing to be built on previously developed land (PDL). For the period 2007/08, 84% of new homes were provided on PDL<sup>77</sup>. The distribution of future housing commitments between previously developed land and Greenfield land until the end of the RSS plan period is shown in Figure 18. It shows that beyond 2011, existing commitments will deliver a higher proportion of dwellings on Greenfield land than has been the case over recent years. Without the identification of a significant amount of new previously developed land for housing, the ability to deliver according to the locational priorities of PPS3 and the RSS may not be able to be achieved.



**Fig 18 Distribution of future housing commitments between PDL and GF land**

Source: DBC, Annual Monitoring Report (2007/08)

<sup>77</sup>DBC, Annual Monitoring Report (2007/08)

- 3.17.6 In terms of house prices, prices for all housing types rose steadily between 2006 and 2008. However prices have crashed in 2009 with an overall average decrease of £15,707 (13%) Each housing type has also decreased by 13% respectively<sup>78</sup>. This may help to make housing more affordable within the borough depending on the future availability of mortgages. However, Darlington borough suffers from a shortfall of affordable housing in relation to needs. This is particularly an issue in rural parts of the Borough and the North and Central parts of the town<sup>79</sup>. Darlington has high affordable housing needs compared to the rest of the Tees Valley. There is a need for an additional 513 affordable homes per annum. The private rented sector, which is 7% of the total housing stock in Darlington, will play a part in meeting this need. The continuing high levels of housing need provides a robust justification for the Council's existing affordable housing policy, though market conditions need to be regularly monitored to ensure that the policy is still appropriate in significantly different housing market conditions.
- 3.17.7 Coupled with the need for affordable housing, housing decency is also an issue which has links with fuel poverty in the Borough as discussed in section 3.6.7. In the period 2006 to 2009 there has been an increase of 3% in the % of non-decent council homes<sup>80</sup>.
- 3.17.8 An additional issue for the Borough is that of meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers based on a 'where needs arise' assessment. It is recommended that a total of 98 additional residential pitches will be required in Darlington in the period 2007 – 2026 to meet identified needs<sup>81</sup>.
- 3.17.9 **Workshop response**
- Delegates agreed with all the housing issues identified. In relation to the mismatch of housing supply in the Borough delegates recommended that policies in the LDF do not exacerbate this and supports the provision of additional housing to match aspirations. In general terms this means more three bed or larger houses, more bungalows, and fewer additional one and two bed properties, particularly in Darlington South East, Darlington Centre and Darlington South West. Only in Darlington South East is there not a demand for additional homes.
- 3.17.10 **Data gaps and limitations**
- None identified

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<sup>78</sup>Land Registry House Prices (2009)

<sup>79</sup>DBC, Affordable Housing SPD (2007)

<sup>80</sup>DBC, Policy Department data on NI158 (2008/09)

<sup>81</sup>Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (2009)

### 3.17.11 **Sustainability issues**

**There is a need to provide sufficient appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of an ageing population but this requirement should to be balanced with the provision of housing that will help the Borough attract and retain higher income families:**

**Mismatch of supply and demand in the existing housing stock**

**Identified shortfall in the number of new houses that will be built and decreasing availability of previously developed land**

**Identified shortfall of affordable housing in relation to needs**

**Need to improve the quality of the existing housing stock**

**Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers**

3.17.12 Part 3 of this report has identified a wide range of key sustainability issues within the Borough. The sustainability issues were identified from a verified, detailed baseline data set and the sustainability workshops. As the SA process continues and following consultation, additional issues may be identified.

3.17.13 Part 4 of this report introduces the Sustainability Appraisal Framework that will be used to appraise the LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Part 4 comprises Task A4 of the SA Scoping stage.

## **4 Part 4: Task A4 – The Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

### **4.1 Task A4**

4.1.1 Task A4 begins the development of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. The SA Framework will appraise (test) the compatibility of the LDF Core Strategy objectives and policies against Sustainable Development principles. It provides a way in which the sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It is central to the entire SA process.

4.1.2 The SA Framework has two components;

Sustainability objectives – these cover the sustainability issues and the SA guidance and SEA Directive requirements

Sustainability Indicators – these are used to monitor progress of the LDF in achieving the sustainability objectives. They are not intended to measure the overall sustainability of the Borough

4.1.3 Development of the Sustainability Objectives:

Figure 19 shows the process followed in the development of the sustainability objectives. The link to the earlier Stage A1-A3 tasks and the sustainability workshop is shown. This process is fully tabulated in **Appendix 4** to show how the objectives were arrived at and how they have been shaped through the consultation process.

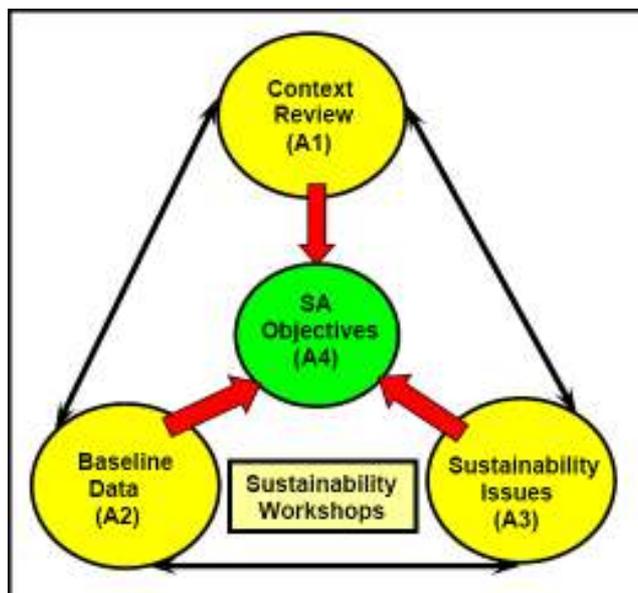


Fig 19 Sustainability Objectives Process

4.1.4 The SA Framework that will be used to appraise the LDF Core Strategy is shown in table 3. The SA Framework contains the sustainability objectives and a number of draft sustainability indicators.

Table 3. Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Sustainability Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicator (s)
1. Attract, encourage and make provision for young people and families within the Borough, whilst catering for an ageing population	<p>Will it encourage young people and families to move to the Borough?</p> <p>Will it encourage young people and families to stay within the Borough?</p> <p>Will the needs of an ageing Population be met?</p>	<p>Levels of in-migration</p> <p>Number and tenure of affordable homes built per annum</p> <p>Number of family size homes built (3-4 bedrooms)</p> <p>Number of new developments for young people e.g. youth clubs</p> <p>Employment created from new developments</p> <p>Number of older persons developments including bungalows and sheltered accommodation</p>

		<p>% of population defined as within 500m of essential facilities and Services</p> <p>% of residents within 400m of public Transport</p> <p>Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood</p> <p>Number of developments that are Disability and Discrimination Act compliant</p>
2. Reduce inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged	<p>Will it help to reduce inequalities in educational achievement?</p> <p>Will it help to reduce inequalities in Employment?</p> <p>Will it help to reduce inequalities in Health</p> <p>Will it improve the public realm within deprived wards?</p>	<p>Educational achievement per ward</p> <p>Number of educational developments wards?</p> <p>Employment levels in the most deprived wards</p> <p>Increase in average weekly wage (lowest quartile)</p> <p>Life expectancy per ward</p> <p>Health developments in priority wards (e.g. recreation facilities, health facilities etc)</p> <p>Number of section 106 agreements for public realm improvements</p>
3. Enhance community identity and Create an empowered and engaged borough wide community of town, villages and countryside that values diversity and cares for others	<p>Will it encourage engagement in Community activities?</p> <p>Will it increase the ability of people to influence local decision making?</p> <p>Will it promote mutual understanding ethnic and cultural groups?</p>	<p>Number of LDF/SA community consultation events</p> <p>Number of community responses received through LDF/SA consultations</p> <p>Level of engagement with hard-to-reach groups</p>
4. Raise aspirations and improve educational attainment and access to qualifications and skills in all of the community through lifelong learning	<p>Will it improve qualifications and skills of young people and adults?</p> <p>Will it address the shortfall in school places?</p>	<p>Education qualifications achieved by Residents</p> <p>Developments incorporating local training/apprenticeship schemes</p> <p>Number of education related developments created or improved</p>
5. Provide a choice and mix of affordably accessible, good quality and well designed sustainable housing.	<p>Will it deliver the appropriate mix of housing to meet the needs of the ageing population, young people and families and skilled in-migrants?</p> <p>Will it deliver adaptable housing to meet the lifelong needs of the population?</p> <p>Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?</p> <p>Will it reduce the number of people</p>	<p>Household types built</p> <p>Developments constructed to lifetime homes standard</p> <p>Average house price</p> <p>Identified affordable housing need, completions and shortfall in delivery</p> <p>level of homelessness</p>

	<p>homeless or in temporary accommodation?</p> <p>Will it reduce the number of unfit homes and those falling below the decent homes standard?</p> <p>Will it reduce the experiences of fuel poverty?</p> <p>Will it deliver housing in sustainable locations with access to employment, and services by walking, cycling or public transport?</p>	<p>Provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches</p> <p>% homes meeting/not meeting the decent home standard. Empty properties</p> <p>Homes built to ecohomes/CSH mandatory standards % of renewable energy contribution per development</p> <p>Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling</p>
6. Improve community safety, reduce crime and anti social behaviour and improve public confidence.	<p>Will it contribute to a sense of personal security and safety?</p> <p>Will it reduce crime and anti-social Behaviour?</p> <p>Will it improve the overall safety of the Borough and help reduce accidents?</p>	<p>Number and type of developments meeting 'secured by design' principles</p>
7. Improve the health and well being of all by reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles	<p>Will it help reduce health inequalities?</p> <p>Will it encourage healthy lifestyles?</p> <p>Will it improve access to health facilities?</p>	<p>Number of section 106 agreements used to provide new or maintain existing open spaces/play areas/allotments</p> <p>Number of health related developments created or improved</p>
8. Contribute to One Planet Living	<p>Will it encourage local food production?</p> <p>Will it reduce energy use in homes?</p> <p>Will it reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport modes?</p>	<p>Number of section 106 agreements used to provide allotments</p> <p>Homes built to ecohomes/CSH mandatory standards % of renewable energy contribution per development</p> <p>Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling</p>
9. Ensure the Borough is prepared for climate change, increase resilience through adaptation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	<p>Will it reduce the risk and impact of flooding?</p> <p>Has the need to cope with climate extremes been considered? E.g. design of buildings and urban Areas</p> <p>Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases?</p>	<p>Number of developments requiring a flood risk assessment Number of developments including flood mitigation measures (SuDS)</p> <p>Number of developments that consider climate extremes</p> <p>Number of developments built to BREEAM or other appropriate Energy efficiency standard Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub></p>

	Will it encourage renewable energy generation?	Number and capacity of developments approved and installed with renewable energy
10. Protect and improve the quality of land and soil and ensure that land and soil is used in a sustainable and innovative manner	Does it reduce contaminated sites and increase remediation?  Will it minimise the loss of land (and soils ) to development?  Will it prioritise development on previously developed land	Number of contaminated sites remediated through new developments  % development on previously developed land % development on Greenfield land
11. Protect and enhance ground and surface water quality and make efficient use of water	Does it improve the quality of water within the borough?  Does it reduce the demand for water?	Positive or negative changes in river (chemical and ecological) Ground water quality and abstraction Nitrate vulnerable zones  Number of developments that incorporate water conservation and pollution control measures e.g. grey water recycling, SuDS.
12. Maintain protect and improve air quality	Will it contribute to reductions in air quality monitoring pollutants at monitoring locations across the Borough?	Per capita emissions of conventional pollutants (co, VOC, NOx, PM10)  Emissions of CO <sub>2</sub>
13. Protect, conserve and improve biodiverse environments through an increasingly connected and high quality green infrastructure and encourage opportunities for habitat creation	Will it maintain and enhance habitats and species?  Will it protect and enhance habitat corridors and linking routes  Does it continue the protection for national and locally designated sites and propose appropriate enhancement?  Does it conserve and enhance/create the BAP priority habitats within the Borough?  Will it improve understanding of the importance of biodiversity?	Number of developments enhancing Biodiversity (natural SuDS etc)  Number of developments contributing to the creation of natural space and wildlife corridors (e.g hedgerow creation)  Progress toward standard of natural and semi-natural green space provision of 5ha/1000 population, such that 60% of the urban population is within 9 minutes (600m) walk of at least one accessible site  Quality and improvement of SSSI's and LNR's  Locally important BAP habitats and populations of BAP species  Number of planning applications required to provide ecological surveys.  Number of developments that provide opportunities to understand and interact with biodiversity

		Progress towards provision of at least 1ha of LNR per 1,000 population
14. Promote sustainable waste and Mineral management , including the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste and mineral resources	<p>Will waste be managed close to source?</p> <p>Will it increase the amount of waste and minerals re-used, recovered and recycled?</p> <p>Will it reduce the amount of waste going to landfill?</p> <p>Will it minimise use of new materials and resources</p>	<p>Location of new waste infrastructure</p> <p>Number of developments incorporating facilities e.g. storage, composting</p> <p>Number of developments with a site waste management plan</p> <p>Number of developments using reclaimed materials in construction</p>
15. Promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport	<p>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?</p> <p>Will it enhance transport connections to reduce distances travelled?</p> <p>Will it encourage the use of alternatives to car travel? E.g. walking, cycling and public transport?</p>	<p>Number of developments located in close proximity to essential services</p> <p>Number of new connected transport routes that create a net reduction in distance travelled</p> <p>Increase in length and quality of public rights of way and cycle routes</p> <p>Level of provision of bus routes as part of new development</p>
16. Preserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment, landscape character and settlements and increase engagement in cultural activities.	<p>Will it protect and enhance features and areas of historic, archaeological and cultural value?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance designated areas?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape?</p> <p>Will it promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings?</p> <p>Will it increase understanding of Darlington's heritage and increase participation in cultural activities?</p>	<p>Identified listed buildings, locally listed/important buildings and structures/heritage, SAMs, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and changes to these</p> <p>Number of up to date conservation area appraisals</p> <p>Number of positive/negative changes to landscape character as a result of incremental development overtime</p> <p>Number of planning permissions delivering benefits to historic and /or s character</p> <p>Number of historic buildings brought back into use by new development schemes</p> <p>Number of developments increasing access to and interpretation of heritage assets</p>

		<p>Numbers of residents taking part in cultural activities</p> <p>Number of developments incorporating public art works</p>
17. To achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth	<p>Does it provide for opportunities to Attract new business to the borough?</p> <p>Will it improve business development?</p> <p>Will it improve the resilience of Businesses?</p> <p>Will it promote growth in key economic areas?</p> <p>Will it protect the viability and vitality of the town centre?</p> <p>Will it encourage sustainable tourism?</p>	<p>Number of economic developments and mixed use developments in the borough</p> <p>Number of businesses and take of land (ha) on allocated employment sites</p> <p>Area of employment land lost to other uses (ha)</p> <p>Number of new employment sites Created</p> <p>Number of town centre and town centre fringe development and regeneration schemes</p> <p>Number of tourism related facilities and opportunities (e.g. hotels)</p>
18. Increase employment levels and Access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities	<p>Will it reduce unemployment?</p> <p>Will it increase earnings?</p> <p>Will it reduce car trips to work?</p>	<p>Employment created from new Developments</p> <p>Increase in average weekly wage</p> <p>Number of employment locations that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling</p>

## 5.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

5.1 The SA scoping stage has provided the following:

- An updated and established list of plans policies and programmes that will influence the revised LDF Core Strategy policies.
- A detailed and up to date baseline of the Borough of Darlington
- A description of the current and likely key sustainability issues that the LDF should address
- The preparation of a SA Framework (objectives and indicators) to appraise the LDF Core Strategy DPD objectives and policies.
- The SA Scoping Report for consultation

5.2 This completes Stage A of the SA process (Figure 1, Part 1)

5.3 The results and comments received from the consultation have been taken account of and have enabled the publication of this final version of the SA/SEA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy 2009. The consultation questions included within the draft SA Scoping

Report are included in **Appendix 5**. The deadline for responses to the consultation was Friday the 7th August 2009.

- 5.4 The SA framework is being used to re-appraise the LDF objectives and issues and options (Task B1 and B2). The findings of task B1 and B2 will then be fed into the re-drafting and appraisal of Core Strategy polices. These polices are being revised as a result of consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options report 2008.
- 5.5 The results of the more detailed Sustainability Appraisal of the LDF Core Strategy will be published in the draft final SA report in October 2009.

*Thank you for taking the time to read this document.*

## **Abbreviations**

AMR – Annual Monitoring Report

BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan

CO<sub>2</sub> – Carbon dioxide

DBC – Darlington Borough Council

DPD – Development Plan Document

EF – Ecological Footprint

HRA – Habitats Regulations Assessment

HWRC – Household Waste Recycling Centre

JSA – Job Seekers Allowance

LDF – Local Development Framework

LNR – Local Nature Reserve

PCPA – Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

PDL – Previously Developed Land

PPS – Planning Policy Statement

PPPs – Plans, Policies and Programmes

PROW – Public Rights of Way

RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy

SA – Sustainability Appraisal

SAM – Scheduled Ancient Monument

SCI – Statement of Community Involvement

SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment

SHLAA – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

SSSI – Sites of Special Scientific Interest

SuDS – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

## TVSHMA – Tees Valley Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

### Glossary

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR):** part of the Local Development Framework, the annual monitoring report will assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents are being successfully implemented.

**Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP):** used to identify targets for the improvement and protection of biodiversity in an area.

**Core Strategy:** sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

**Development Plan:** as set out in Section 38(6) of the Act, an authority's development plan consists of the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy and the Development Plan Documents contained within its Local Development Framework.

**Development Plan Documents (DPD's):** spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, and together with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy, will form the development plan for a local authority area for the purposes of the Act. They can include a Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations of land, and Area Action Plans (where needed). Other Development Plan Documents, including Generic Development Control Policies, can be produced. They will all be shown geographically on an adopted proposals map. Individual Development Plan Documents or parts of a document can be reviewed independently from other Development Plan Documents. Each authority must set out the programme for preparing its Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Scheme.

**Local Development Documents (LDD's):** the collective term in the Act for Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

**Local Development Framework (LDF) :** the name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area and may also include local development orders and simplified planning zones.

**Regional Spatial Strategy:** sets out the region's policies in relation to the development and use of land and forms part of the Development Plan for local planning authorities. Planning Policy Statement 11, 'Regional Spatial Strategies', provides detailed guidance on the function and preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** an area of land, which is of national interest due to its flora and fauna or geological or physio geographical features. Site specific allocations: allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development to be contained in Development Plan Documents. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

**Special Area of Conservation:** a site designated under the Habitats Directive to protect internationally important habitats and species. **Special Protection Area:** a site designated under the Birds Directive that is of international importance to birds.

**Statement of Community Involvement:** sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving local communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents and development control decisions. The statement of community Involvement is not a Development Plan Document but is subject to independent examination.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:** a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use'.

**Supplementary Planning Documents:** provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

**Sustainability Appraisal:** tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Act to be undertaken for all local development documents. **Sustainable Development:** development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS):** local authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare these, with aim of improving the social, environmental and economic well being of their areas. Through the SCS, authorities are expected to co-ordinate the actions of local public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Responsibility for producing Sustainable Community Strategies may be passed to Local Strategic Partnerships, which include local authority representatives.