



WHAT THE LOCAL PLAN SETS OUT TO DO

- Provide a continuous and diverse supply of employment land to meet the needs of existing and future economic development. The focus will be on various sites across the town including, Darlington Town Centre, Central Park, Town Centre Fringe, Faverdale, Lingfield Area, Morton Palms Business Park Area and Durham Tees Valley Airport.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

A new Economic Strategy (2012-2026) was prepared during 2011/12, and was finalised and adopted by Darlington Partnership in September 2012. The Council continues to work with its delivery partners to develop detailed action plans to underpin each of the Priority Actions of the Strategy. The Strategy re-affirms the importance of strategic employment sites such as Morton Palms, Faverdale, Lingfield and Central Park that are being actively promoted for employment development. It also provides a strategic approach to tackling constraints to development and identifies investment in infrastructure as key to unlocking further development at these locations.

This is particularly important given the lack of completed development on employment land over recent years. The Council's employment land monitoring database shows that there have been no significant changes in the composition of employment land during the monitoring period from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. While the database records are only based on starts and completions which are signed off by the Local Authority, it is a clear indication of a slowdown in economic activity within the Borough, reflecting circumstances more widely across the sub-region and nationally.

The Business Sites and Premises Review was completed in February 2013. This key piece of work was commissioned to underpin planning policies and provide evidence for the allocation of sites within the Local Plan, including the costs of overcoming constraints to development.

Work is continuing on projects that will help to unlock development at strategic employment locations in the medium to long term. A Logistics Study has been commissioned to look at the sector in the context of available employment sites in Darlington. It is expected that this will be completed in spring 2014.

Public Sector Hub – Town centre: Work commenced on 2nd December 2013, on a new office building adjacent to the Town Hall Building which will accommodate the Department for Education Relocation.

Permission has been granted for a cinema / leisure development at the Feethams site and work is expected to commence in 2014.



DFE Building



Central Park: Central Park is designated as one of the Tees Valley's 12 Enterprise Zone sites; EZ status brings business rate relief, simplified planning rules and superfast broadband, aimed at supporting and facilitating the emerging and fast-growing digital and biologics sectors. Development of the first two commercial buildings is scheduled to commence in 2014/15 with the Business Growth Hub offering high quality managed and serviced office accommodation to SMEs with up to 52 individual units and the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre. In total these two developments will amount to c8,000sqm B1 space.



Darlington Growth Hub

Within the Enterprise Zone, a Local Development Order is also in place permitting development for all business (B1) land uses, with limited retail (A1), café and restaurant (A3) and drinking establishment (A4) uses where this helps to sustain the viability and vitality of Central Park. The site also benefits from a hybrid planning permission for the wider Central Park development which comprises up to 500 new homes, 26,000sqm commercial (B1) development, a local centre and a range of smaller café/restaurant type uses within a setting of high quality public realm and areas of open space.

Residential development commenced at Central Park North in July 2013, which seeks to deliver c330 new homes over the next 10 years, together with a significant portion of the Linear park which forms the back bone to the Central Park Masterplan. It is expected that the Local Centre will be delivered in 2015/16.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The lack of significant completed development in the borough reflects the national, regional and sub-regional economic position over recent years, and is not unique to Darlington.

Allocation of new sites through the new Local Plan, including identifying areas of opportunity in the Town Centre and the Town Centre Fringe, is just one strand of the actions identified in the Economic Strategy. Despite little physical development over the last year, there is evidence of exciting moves, developments and continued investments in existing companies, as can be seen from the cinema / leisure development and the public sector hub at Feethams, as well as opportunities for spin offs and sectoral growth from other exciting developments such as the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre, and growth of existing sectors such as subsea engineering and the new C-STATE subsea training facility at Central Park.

MOVING THINGS FORWARD: KEY ACTIONS

- Continue to implement and monitor the progress of the actions of the Economic Strategy
- Make site allocations in accordance with the locational strategy in the Core Strategy.
- Publish the Logistics Study



Contact Us: You can access more information on planning policy in Darlington at:

www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

If you are particularly interested in statistics and data for Darlington borough, you can view these at:

<http://lis.darlington.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, contact the Planning Policy Team on **01325 388644** or email planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

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