



WHAT THE LOCAL PLAN SETS OUT TO DO

- Achieve the standards of open space provision set out in the Open Space Strategy in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- Protect and where appropriate, enhance and extend the network of green space, including allotments across the Town and to improve accessibility to these areas.
- Achieve the hierarchy of provision for sports facilities set out in the Core Strategy in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

Open Space: A joint project to restore Brinkburn Denes was completed in 2011. Partners involved Friends of the Denes, Darlington Council and Groundwork North East and the project was supported by £878,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund. Improvements included new entrances to the park, new seating, lighting and signs along popular cross routes, an adventurous play area, new bridges and resurfaced tennis courts.

Also during 2011/12, work has been carried out at both Broken Scar Recreation Area and West Park to provide quality adventurous play spaces which fit well in the natural landscape. Use of water and trees encourage interaction with nature, and add variety and quality to Darlington's play offer.

Biodiversity: The Council's Wildflower management programme has improved access to and the amenity of over 20ha of low quality grassland. This includes Skerne Corridor, Cocker Beck Valley and Baydale Meadows. The £35,000 Cocker Beck river corridor project was completed in 2012, improving biodiversity and public access, with three new ponds and a wildflower meadow.

The Borough has four Sites of Special Scientific Interest, whose management plans are overseen by Natural England. The number of designated wildlife sites validated by Tees Valley Local Nature Partnership has increased from 25 in 2010/11 to 27 in 2012, of which 10 are being actively managed. The two new ones are at Hunger Hill Farm and Oxbow Lake.



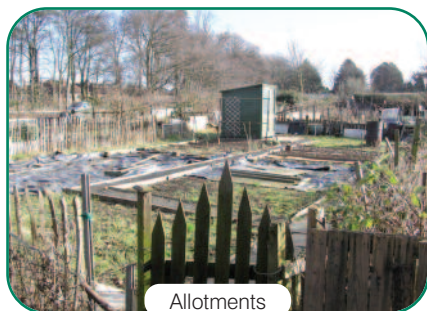
Cocker Beck Valley Wildflower Management



Baydale Meadows Wildflower Management

Darlington Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2012

OPEN SPACE FACT SHEET



Open Space: While demand for allotments continues to exceed available land, the Council and the Self Managed Associations that run some allotments have successfully re-allocated many plots, in some cases sub dividing plots so that more people can grow their own food.

A new allotment site has also been provided at Lingfield Point, over time it will become part of the large new development that is planned for the rest of the site.

People value the multiple uses that much of the Borough's open space provides, but, for the purposes of monitoring changes in provision, it is the primary purpose or use of the space which is of particular importance. A summary of open space in the Borough is shown in the table below.

Open Space: Primary Purpose 2011

	No of Spaces 2011	Total Site Area (Ha) 2011
Parks and gardens	14	82.36
Informal recreation	89	79.45
Green Corridors	26	131.1
Wildlife friendly green spaces	31	248.36
Children and young people provision	22	16.66
Landscape amenity space	48	26.82
Cemeteries and churchyards	10	33.03
Civic Spaces	4	0.71
Total	244	618.49
Allotments	28	28.62

Source: Darlington Borough Council.

The amount of informal recreation space has reduced significantly, this is because the space has been transformed into wildlife friendly greenspace which has increased as a result. The number of green corridors has remained constant but the total area covered by green corridors has risen slightly as a result of the change in the primary purpose of several spaces. For example, Cocker Beck Valley is now a green corridor and has incorporated another adjoining space, Eggleston View play area.

Outdoor Sports: Darlington's participation rate in sporting activities is higher than the National and Regional average, and currently is the highest in the Tees Valley (23%). Football is the most popular activity; 68% of teams play adult, junior or mini football. To help meet the increasing demand for football pitches, in 2011 a new synthetic turf pitch was provided at Longfield Academy, improving quantity, quality and access to all weather sports facilities.

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The amount of open space which is available primarily for children and young people has risen slightly and this is due to the change in the primary purpose of some areas, for example, Broken Scar is now a play area separate to the Tees Corridor. In terms of other changes during the last year, resurveying has led to an increase in landscape amenity and a new civic space has been identified in front of the Town Hall building



Example of Adventurous Play Space at North Park



New Meadow at Cockerbeck

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Council has continued to work in partnership with Friends Groups, Self Managed Associations, education facilities, the community and other organisations to progress key projects which are designed to improve access to high quality open space and sports facilities particularly in and around the urban area and urban fringe. In this challenging economic climate, it is more difficult to secure funding for the delivery of projects but through partnership working projects will continue to be prioritised which can deliver multiple benefits for the community.

In terms of allotment provision, the costs of converting land to allotments has increased because of new requirements for environmental testing of soils, while there is less money available to fund the work. The Council will continue to look at opportunities for converting land to allotments or re-allocation of space to address the needs of the waiting list, and will introduce new standards for provision of allotments through the Local Plan.



MOVING THINGS FORWARD: KEY ACTIONS

- Adopt the Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy by early 2013.
- Adopt the Darlington Sport and Physical Activity Strategy by Spring 2013.
- Adopt the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document in January 2013.
- Provide up to date standards for providing different types of open space and sports facilities within the emerging Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document.
- Make more land available for allotments by converting land where this is viable or by re-allocating existing open space or by changing the management of sites where this is possible.
- Standards of provision for allotments will be included in the Local Plan and will provide details on changes in management across the Borough.
- Work with developers to ensure an appropriate amount of open space and sports facilities is provided by new developments.

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

This document is available in different formats on request.