Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

Planning for the Protection of European Sites

Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment: Screening Report

Darlington Borough Council October 2019

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) is in the process of developing its Local Plan for the borough to cover the period 2016-2036. Consultation was undertaken on a Draft Local Plan during the summer of 2018. In accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive"), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the "Habitats Regulations"), DBC is required to undertake Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Local Plan.

1.1.2 The Habitats Directive, adopted in 1992, aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring European Member States to take measures to maintain or restore the habitats listed on Annex I of the Directive and species listed on Annex II, introducing protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In relation to plans and projects the following Articles apply:

> ***Habitats Directive***
>
> ***Article 6(3)***
> *Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*
>
> ***Article 6(4)***
> *If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.*

These measures are also to be applied to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC (the "Birds Directive") on the conservation of wild birds (the codified version of Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended).

1.1.3 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate the previous regulations and transpose the legal requirements of the Habitats Directive into national law, stating at Regulation 105(1) that:

> ***Habitat Regulations***
>
> ***Regulation 105(1)***
> *Where a land use plan -*
> *(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
> *(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.*

1.2 Appropriate Assessment Process

1.2.1 Under the Habitats Regulations, all competent authorities (in this case DBC) must consider whether any plan or project – including the Local Plan or a supplementary planning document (SPD) – will have a 'likely significant effect' on one or more European sites of nature conservation importance. If so, they must carry out carry out an 'appropriate assessment'. This is known as Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA). Projects and plans can only be permitted where the competent authority is satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the relevant European sites.

1.2.2 The approach undertaken by DBC in this report is based on the EC document 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (Oxford Brookes University, for European Commission Environment DG, 2001), in particular the Annex 2 assessment forms.

1.2.3 Stage 1 of the HRA process is the screening of proposed plans or projects for likely significant effects on European sites of nature conservation importance. Assessment of the significance of effects is undertaken in relation to the designated interest features and conservation objectives of each European site. Any effect that would compromise the functioning and viability of a site and prevent it from sustaining those features in a favorable condition is judged to create a significant effect. Where no significant effects are identified then no further steps need to be taken. Where significant effects are likely, a more detailed Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary. If insufficient information is available to make a clear judgment the precautionary principle should be adopted. This process will often establish mitigation measures or alternatives, which can offset all significant adverse effects and enable the plan or project to go forward. However, where this is not the case, other more stringent measures need to be considered including potentially the plan or project.

1.3 Natura 2000 Sites

1.3.1 Natura 2000 sites, also known as European sites, are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community. Natura 2000 sites include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - designated under the Habitats Directive, SACs are important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive. The listed habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds); and,
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - designated under the Birds Directive, SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the Directive. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

Stretching over 18% of the European Union's land area and almost 6% of its marine territory, Natura 2000 sites make up the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, offering a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

1.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that listed or proposed Ramsar sites should be given the same protection as European sites (paragraph 176, MHCLG, NPPF 2019). Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 International Convention on Wetlands (the "Ramsar Convention"), which took place at Ramsar in Iran.

1.3.3 In this report the term 'Natura 2000 sites' refers to Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites.

2. Description of the Plan

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section of the report Draft Darlington Local Plan is reviewed to identify any aspects of the document that might influence the key environmental conditions that need to be maintained or improved in order to preserve the integrity of European sites. Indirect as well as direct impacts have been considered.

2.2 Darlington Draft Local Plan

2.2.1 The Local Plan will be a framework for how the borough will develop over the next 20 years to 2036. It will set out where new development requirements should go and include planning policies to guide the location, type and form of development proposals across the borough in order to protect valued environments and heritage, stimulate

economic growth, and create sustainable, liveable places. It includes a vision and objectives for the borough and sets out how these will be achieved.

2.2.2 Once adopted the Local Plan will replace the Council's Core Strategy (2011) and 'saved policies' from the 1997 Local Plan (1997, with alterations in 2001). The Development Plan for the borough also contains a Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2011), and a Minerals and Waste Policies and Sites Development Plan Document (2011).

2.2.3 The Local Plan needs to ensure that the borough's needs for housing, employment, community facilities and infrastructure are met, as well as safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. The Draft Local Plan was published for public consultation during the summer of 2018, the latest stage in the process of preparing a new plan for the borough. The draft plan sets out the requirement for at least 10,000 new homes in the borough by 2036, supporting the creation of at least 7000 new jobs, and helping to sustain a vibrant town centre, local communities, and high quality sports and recreation facilities and green spaces.

2.2.4 The full list of proposed policies in the Draft Local Plan is as follows:

Sustainable Development
Policy SD 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy

Design and Construction
Policy DC 1 Sustainable Design Principles
Policy DC 2 Health and Wellbeing
Policy DC 3 Safeguarding Amenity
Policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage Systems
Policy DC 5 Skills and Training

Housing
Policy H 1 Housing Requirement
Policy H 2 Housing Allocations
Policy H 3 Development Limits
Policy H 4 Housing Mix
Policy H 5 Affordable Housing
Policy H 6 Rural Exceptions
Policy H 7 Residential Development in the Countryside
Policy H 8 Housing Intensification
Policy H 9 Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation
Policy H 10 Skerningham Strategic Allocation
Policy H 11 Greater Faverdale - Strategic Site Allocation

Employment for Economic Growth
Policy E 1 Safeguarding Existing Employment Opportunities
Policy E 2 Promotion of New Employment Opportunities

Policy E 3 Darlington Farmers Auction Mart Relocation
Policy E 4 Economic Development in the Open Countryside

Town Centre and Retail
Policy TC 1 Darlington – Town Centre Boundary
Policy TC 2 Primary Shopping Area
Policy TC 3 Additional Site for Town Centre Uses
Policy TC 4 District and Local Centres
Policy TC 5 Retail Impact Assessment Threshold
Policy TC 6 Darlington - Town Centre Fringe

Environment
Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment
Policy ENV 2 Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR)
Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character
Policy ENV 4 Green Infrastructure
Policy ENV 5 Green Infrastructure Standards
Policy ENV 6 Local Green Space
Policy ENV 7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development
Policy ENV 8 Assessing a Developments Impact on Biodiversity
Policy ENV 9 Outdoor Sports Facilities

Transport and Infrastructure
Policy IN 1 Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network
Policy IN 2 Improving Access and Accessibility
Policy IN 3 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
Policy IN 4 Parking Provision including Electric Vehicle Charging
Policy IN 5 Airport Safety
Policy IN 6 Utilities Infrastructure
Policy IN 7 Telecommunication Masts
Policy IN 8 Broadband Infrastructure
Policy IN 9 Renewable and Energy Efficient Infrastructure
Policy IN 10 Supporting the Delivery of Community and Social Infrastructure

2.3 Potential Types of Impact

2.3.1 Following consideration of the Draft Local Plan policies, a number of potential impacts have been identified that could affect Natura 2000 sites, including:

- Air quality: a change in the composition of air that disperses in the vicinity of a Natura 2000 site can damage vegetation and harm species living in these habitats.

- Water quality: a change in the composition of water that flows to Natura 2000 sites can damage vegetation and harm species living in these habitats.

- Hydrology: Changes in hydrology can result in drought or flooding of Natura 2000 sites that can damage vegetation and species living in these habitats.

- Habitat or species disturbance (including species movement and recreational pressure): If any representatives of the site target species that use Natura 2000 sites also spend time in Darlington borough, then changes to land use in Darlington borough may affect those individuals and their movement patterns, potentially affecting the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites. In addition, development that attracts additional residents to the Borough could cause additional recreational visits to any Natura 2000 sites nearby, potentially disturbing the habitats and wildlife there.

- Climate change: Climate change will have a direct impact on habitats and species. Local Plan policies could also impact on the ability of species to adapt to climate change. In particular, placing restrictions on the movement of species may restrict their ability to adapt to climate change.

2.4 Screening Analysis of the Darlington's Draft Local Plan

2.4.1 This section considers each of the policies put forward in the Draft Local Plan.

Table 1: Policy Analysis of Potential Impacts on Natura 2000 Sites

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
CHAPTER 3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
Policy SD 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development General statement, required by national policy, that the Council will work to deliver sustainable development	Air Quality	No specific impact – Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including Policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4). Any impact on air quality is likely to be local in nature and would not significantly affect Natura 2000 sites.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Increased water use from new development, and increased sewage output into rivers could adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, development that would have a significant negative effect on water quality could not be described as 'sustainable' and should therefore not gain planning permission under the presumption. Paragraph 11 d) i. and Footnote 6 of the NPPF provide that, under the presumption in favour of sustainable development, planning permission should not be granted where policies protecting areas or assets of particular importance (including Natura 2000 sites and other irreplaceable habitats) provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Hydrology	No specific significant impact – Land use change from new development can influence the quantity and rate of surface water runoff to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence the hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, development that would have a significant negative effect on hydrology could not be described as 'sustainable' and should therefore not gain planning permission under the presumption. Paragraph 11 d) i. and Footnote 6 of the NPPF provide that, under the presumption in favour of sustainable development, planning permission should not be granted where policies protecting areas or assets of particular importance (including Natura 2000 sites and other irreplaceable habitats) provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – The additional people housed by new development can disturb wildlife locally and through increased recreational pressure placed on Nature 2000 sites. However, development that would have a significant negative effect on protected habitats or species could not be described as 'sustainable' and should therefore not gain planning permission under the presumption. Paragraph 11 d) i. and Footnote 6 of the NPPF provide that, under the presumption in favour of sustainable development, planning permission should not be granted where policies protecting areas or assets of particular importance (including Natura 2000 sites and other irreplaceable habitats) provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Increased vehicle trips and on-site energy use are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
CHAPTER 4: SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY		
Policy SH 1: Settlement Hierarchy Directs development towards those settlements with the infrastructure and services to support growth, proportionate to the role and function of settlements	Air Quality	No specific impact – Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4). By directing development towards higher order settlements there will be more opportunities for the occupiers of new developments to use sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel. Any impact on air quality is likely to be local in nature and would not significantly affect Natura 2000 sites.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Increased water use from new development, and increased sewage output into rivers could adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. The potential impact of development on water quality will depend on the specific location and circumstances of each site along with the type and scale of development proposed.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Land use change from new development can influence the quantity and rate of surface water runoff to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence the hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. The potential impact of development on hydrology will depend on the specific location and circumstances of each site along with the type and scale of development proposed.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – The additional people housed by new development can disturb wildlife locally and through increased recreational pressure placed on Nature 2000 sites. The potential impact of development on habitats and species will depend on the specific location and circumstances of each site along with the type and scale of development proposed. However, any impact is likely to be local in nature and would not significantly affect Natura 2000 sites located outside the borough.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Increased vehicle trips and on-site energy use are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
CHAPTER 5: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION		
Policy DC 1: Sustainable Design Principles Promotes good quality, safe and sustainable design in all new developments and resilience to climate change	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will reduce impacts to air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use through encouraging sustainable design and construction techniques; improving connectivity by cycling and walking; and enhancing the natural environment through following good design principles.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Will reduce water use and pollution through encouraging sustainable design and construction techniques.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology. Sustainable design and construction techniques should help to conserve water/reduce the risk of flooding.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – The policy states that any landscaping associated with development should be developed so as to enhance both the natural and built environment.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new development through encouraging the use of sustainable design and construction techniques.
Policy DC 2: Health and Wellbeing Promotes developments that support improvements to health and wellbeing in Darlington	All	No specific impact – This is a positive policy containing a number of measures intended to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the borough that should also benefit the natural environment. The policy promotes sustainable travel choices; physical activity and the improvement of green infrastructure; improving air and water quality; reducing noise and other sources of pollution; and, requires health impact assessments for larger scale developments.
Policy DC 3: Safeguarding Amenity Sets criteria to control the effect of new	Air Quality	No specific impact – By restricting polluting development, this policy should help protect air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – By restricting polluting development, this policy should help protect water quality.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
development on the amenity of existing users/neighbouring land in terms of its physical relationship and from potential sources of pollution	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – By restricting polluting development, this policy should minimize impacts on habitats and species.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – By restricting polluting development, this policy should help limit greenhouse gas emissions.
Policy DC 4: Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) Expects developments to reduce flood risk, be designed so as to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and incorporate SUDs where appropriate	Air Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality.
	Air Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – By limiting the impact of new development on the sewer system or watercourses, and by reducing the risk of flooding incidents, this policy should help protect water quality. The policy stipulates that t drainage systems must be designed and constructed so that surface water discharge does not adversely impact on the water quality of receiving water bodies, both during construction and when operational. New development is expected to improve water quality where possible.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – By limiting the impact of new development on the sewer system or watercourses, and by reducing the risk of flooding incidents, this policy should help protect hydrology. Development is to be focused in areas of low flood risk.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Encouraging the uses of attenuation SUDS systems will have a positive impact on wildlife, possibly including Natura 2000 site qualifying species. New development is expected to improve water quality where possible, as well as maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity and habitat of watercourses.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – All development proposals are expected to be designed to mitigate and adapt to the effect of climate change on flood risk and drainage. The policy will help the water cycle in Darlington borough to cope with the effects of climate change and accommodating new development.
Policy DC 5: Skills and Training Encourages developers to commit to providing employment skills and training during the construction and operational phases of builds	All	No specific impact – This policy relates to providing local employment opportunities on development sites in the borough and will have no impact on Natura 2000 sites.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
CHAPTER 6: HOUSING		
Policy H 1: Housing Requirement Sets out how much new housing is needed over the plan period to 2036 and expectations in terms of its delivery	Air Quality	Increased car trips arising from more population/dwellings will lead to air pollution (especially NOx). However, the effect will be minimised as the plan prioritises housing in more sustainable locations, maximising options for sustainable travel choices and locating new development close to facilities and job opportunities.
	Water Quality	Increased water use from new dwellings, and increased sewage output into rivers, could potentially adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. The potential impact of development on water quality will depend on the specific location and circumstances of each site along with the type and scale of development proposed. However, the potential for any impact from new development on water quality will be minimised through the application of polciies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Hydrology	Land use change can influence the quantity and rate of surface water runoff to watercourses and groundwater. This could potentially influence the hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Potential impact of new development and additional population on local wildlife sites that may be important to species moving between higher level wildlife sites across the region and sub region. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies ENV 7 and ENV 8, with the focus on the delivering biodiversity net gains.
	Climate Change	Increased car trips and on-site energy use from increased population/dwellings will lead to greenhouse gas emissions. However, the effect will be minimised as the plan prioritises housing in sustainable locations, maximising options for sustainable travel choices and locating new development close to facilities and job opportunities. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of new housing development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9.
Policy H 2: Housing Allocations Allocates new sites in and on the edge of Darlington's urban area and the boroughs larger villages for housing, as well as identifying already committed sites. In total the policy plans for 5075 new dwellings on allocation sites during the plan period	Air Quality	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of new housing development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4).
	Water Quality	Increased water use from new development, and increased sewage output into rivers could potentially adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact from new development on water quality will be minimised through the application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Hydrology	Land use change from new development can influence the quantity and rate of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could potentially influence the hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Potential impact of new development and additional population on local wildlife sites that may be important to species moving between higher level wildlife sites across the region and sub region. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies ENV 7 and ENV 8, with the focus on the delivering biodiversity net gains.
	Climate Change	Increased vehicle trips and on-site energy use are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions. However, the effect will be minimised as the plan prioritises housing in sustainable locations, maximising options for sustainable travel choices and locating new development close to facilities and job opportunities. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of new housing development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9.
Policy H 3: Development Limits Designates the boundaries of settlements for planning purposes	All	No specific impact – The policy does not propose any significant changes to development limits, other than to accommodate allocations proposed through other policies in this document. Development limits will help to control the prevalence of unplanned windfall developments over the plan period.
Policy H 4: Housing Mix Sets out the Council's expectations on the type, size and tenure of housing to be built to meet local needs	All	No specific impact – The policy deals with the type, size and tenure of housing only. New housing will be built to building regulation standards, with developers expected to adopt sustainable design and construction techniques, as set out in policy DC 1.
Policy H 5: Affordable Housing Identifies requirements for the provision of affordable housing on residential development, and the exceptions where off-site provision may be permissible	All	No specific impact – The policy deals with the tenure of housing only. New housing will be built to building regulation standards, with developers expected to adopt sustainable design and construction techniques, as set out in policy DC 1.
Policy H 6: Rural Exceptions Enables small scale affordable housing schemes to be built in rural settlements to meet identified local needs	All	No specific impact – The policy deals with small scale affordable housing schemes in rural areas, permitted in exceptional circumstances where they are the only option to meet identified local needs. New housing will be built to building regulation standards, with developers expected to adopt sustainable design and construction techniques, as set out in policy DC 1.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
Policy H 7: Residential Development in the Countryside States criteria to be met by any housing development outside development limits	All	No specific impact – The policy restricts the development of new dwellings in the countryside. Therefore it is unlikely to result in any impact on local Natura 2000 sites.
Policy H 8: Housing Intensification Sets out the criteria under which proposals for HMO and backland garden development will be permissible	All	No specific impact – The policy does not specifically promote development, dealing with the subdivision of existing properties, and also places restrictions on garden land development.
Policy H 9: Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Sets the criteria for the development of Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation	All	No specific impact – The potential impacts are similar to those identified for policy H 2, although on a smaller scale. New sites would be remote from Natura 2000 sites.
Policy H 10: Skerningham Strategic Allocation Allocation of a major urban extension to the north east of Darlington town, with up to 4,500 (1,800 in the plan period) homes, green space and supporting physical and social infrastructure	Air Quality	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development, in particular from sites on the urban edge, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of new housing development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4). In addition, development on this site will include facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents including local shops, services and schools reducing the need to travel.
	Water Quality	The Skerningham site lies adjacent to the River Skerne. Land use change can influence quality of surface run off. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact on water quality will be minimised through the application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Hydrology	The policy proposes significant green space adjoining the watercourses, and SUDS (in line with policy DC 4), which will prevent negative effects on hydrology from this greenfield development.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Large site that could result in increased recreational pressure on Natura 2000 sites in the Teesside area. Development will result in the loss of large areas of agricultural land that could have an impact on migratory birds, however, large masterplan framework proposes the retention of fields along the south side of the river Skerne and large swathes of agricultural land exists to the north an east of the site. Under the NPPF and policy ENV 7 sites will be expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity as a result of development. The policy stipulates that the site should deliver a net gain in the area of community woodland on the site, retain and enhance hedgerows and trees and provide a pattern of interconnected green infrastructure.
	Climate Change	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development, in particular from site on the urban edge, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of new housing development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9.
Policy H 11: Greater Faverdale - Strategic Site Allocation Allocation of a major urban extension to the north east of Darlington town, with up to 2,000 homes, 200,000 sqm employment land, green space and supporting physical and social infrastructure	Air Quality	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development, in particular from urban extensions, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of new housing development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4). In addition, development on this site will include facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents including local shops, services and schools reducing the need to travel. Local employment opportunities also exist on the adjacent employment area and as part of the mixed use development.
	Water Quality	Land use change can influence quality of surface run off. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be avoided through the application of policies DC 1 and DC4.
	Hydrology	The policy proposes significant green space adjoining the watercourses, and SUDS (in line with policy DC 4), which will prevent negative effects on hydrology from the greenfield development.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Large site that could result in increased recreational pressure on Natura 2000 sites in the Teesside area. Under the NPPF and policy ENV 7 sites will be expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity as a result of development.
	Climate Change	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development, in particular at the urban fringe, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of new housing development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
CHAPTER 7: EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH		
Policy E 1: Safeguarding Existing Employment Opportunities Identifies existing employment sites in the borough that are to be promoted and safeguarded as areas for investment	All	No specific impact – This policy safeguards existing employment areas that already have permission for employment uses. It does not allocate new land. Whilst changes in the employment uses operating on these sites could potentially affect environmental conditions impacting on Natura 2000 sites, the purpose of the HRA screening statement is to assess the potential impact of land use changes/policy implications resulting from the emerging Local Plan. New development on existing employment areas in the borough will require planning permission and, as such, will need to satisfy the policies set out in the emerging Local Plan relating to environmental protection and sustainable design and construction (including meeting BREEAM 'very good' standards).
Policy E 2: Promotion of New Employment Opportunities Allocates land for new employment uses to meet the employment needs of the borough over the plan period, including land at DTVA	Air Quality	Increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx). However, a number of policies in the draft plan will ensure that the impact of new housing development on air quality is minimised through the construction and design of buildings, encouraging more sustainable forms of transport and providing new and enhancing existing green infrastructure alongside development (including policies DC 1, IN 1 and ENV 4). Depending on the nature of the activity involved, some employment uses could potentially be more polluting than others. The impact of industry on the environment will be controlled by the relevant regulatory regimes and licensing systems. New development will also need to satisfy the policies set out in the emerging Local Plan relating to environmental protection and sustainable design and construction (including meeting BREEAM 'very good' standards). The allocation of land at Durham Tees Valley Airport may result in an increase in flights to and from the airport with a potential impact on air quality, adversely affecting Natura 2000 sites as a result.
	Water Quality	Increased water use from new development, and increased sewage output into rivers could potentially adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact from new development on water quality will be minimised through the application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Hydrology	Land use change from new development can influence the quantity and rate of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could potentially influence the hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Potential impact of new development and additional population on local wildlife sites that may be important to species moving between higher level wildlife sites across the region and sub region. However, the potential for any impact will be minimised through application of policies ENV 7 and ENV 8, with the focus on the delivering biodiversity net gains.
	Climate Change	Increased vehicle trips and on-site energy use are likely to arise from new development even if it is comparatively sustainable, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions. However, the effect will be minimised as the plan prioritises housing in sustainable locations, maximising options for sustainable travel choices and locating new development close to facilities and job opportunities. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of new housing development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9. Development of Durham Tees Valley Airport area may impact on greenhouse gas emissions through increased industrial and logistics activity.
Policy E 3: Darlington Farmers Auction Mart Relocation Allocation of land along the A68 to the west of the A1(M) the relocation of the Darlington Auction Mart and ancillary rural economic development	Air Quality	This policy involves the relocation of the Darlington Auction Mart from the town centre to the west side of the town close to the A1(M). Whilst it should result in an improvement in the air quality of the town centre, increased vehicle trips are likely to arise from the development due to an expansion of related economic activities, with some impact on air pollution (especially NOx).
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Land use change can influence quality of surface run off. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be avoided through the application of policies DC 1 and DC4.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – The application of policy DC4 will prevent negative effects on hydrology from this greenfield development.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Should not cause any change to factors affecting habitats of species that would impact on Natura 2000 sites.
	Climate Change	Increased vehicle trips and on-site energy use are likely to arise from development, with some impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Could increase greenhouse gases through increased travelling to the Borough which may impact on Natura 2000 sites. Other policies in the draft plan will also help to reduce the impact of development on climate change, and adapt to its effects, including policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 3 and IN 9.
Policy E 4: Economic Development in the Open Countryside States the criteria to be met by any economic development outside development limits	All	No specific impact – The policy places restrictions on the type, location and scale of economic development in the countryside. As a result it is unlikely to lead to result in any impact on Natura 2000 sites.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
CHAPTER 8: TOWN CENTRE AND RETAIL		
Policy TC 1: Darlington - Town Centre Boundary Directs proposals for new town centre uses towards Darlington town centre first	Air Quality	No specific impact – Directs proposals for main town centre uses (including retail, offices and leisure activities) towards Darlington town centre which has greater accessibility by more sustainable modes of travel.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Directs development towards the town centre which would be more likely to result in the remediation of contaminated land which will help to improve water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Land use change can influence quantity and rate of surface water runoff to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However, the town centre is already largely built up and new development should not have a considerable effect on hydrology, especially with the application of policy DC 4.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Could reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through the promotion of Darlington town centre as a visitor destination.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Will reduce the need to travel by resisting out of town retail development, concentrating main town centre uses in the centre of Darlington which is more accessible by sustainable modes of travel, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor travel.
Policy TC 2: Primary Shopping Area Sets the extent of Darlington town centres Primary Shopping Area and the criteria for considering proposals for non-retail uses in shopping frontages	Air Quality	No specific impact – The town centre is the borough's most accessible location by public transport, walking and cycling; by protecting the vitality and viability of the town centre this policy will support the use of more sustainable forms of transport to access facilities and services in the town centre and help limit air pollution from vehicles travelling to competing destinations further afield.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – May reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through promotion of Darlington town centre as a visitor destination.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – The town centre is the borough's most accessible location by public transport, walking and cycling; by protecting the vitality and viability of the town centre this policy will support the use of more sustainable forms of transport to access facilities and services in the town centre and help limit greenhouse gasses emitted from vehicles travelling to competing destinations further afield.
Policy TC 3: Additional Site for Town Centre Uses Allocates land on the north west side of Darlington town centre to accommodate future needs for main town	Air Quality	No specific impact – Darlington town centre is the borough's most accessible location by public transport, walking and cycling; by encouraging people to travel to the town centre rather than competing destinations on the edge of the town or further afield is likely to reduce car travel which impacts upon air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
centre uses and sets criteria against which proposals will be considered	Hydrology	No specific impact – Development of this site would provide an opportunity to improve the management of drainage from the site which is currently predominately surface level car parks with impermeable surface treatments.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Could reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through promotion of Darlington town centre as a visitor destination.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Darlington town centre is the borough's most accessible location by public transport, walking and cycling; by encouraging people to travel to the town centre rather than competing destinations on the edge of the town or further afield is likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from car travel.
Policy TC 4: District and Local Centres Identifies the Borough's district and local centres and sets criteria for development in them	Air Quality	No specific impact – By protecting the vitality and viability of District and Local Centres, that provide everyday services and facilities close to residential areas, this policy will limit air pollution caused by vehicles travelling to destinations further afield in order to access these facilities.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting habitats and species.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – By protecting the vitality and viability of District and Local Centres, that provide everyday services and facilities close to residential areas, this policy will limit greenhouse gas emissions caused by vehicles travelling to destinations further afield in order to access these facilities.
Policy TC 5: Retail Impact Assessment Threshold Sets out a local floorspace threshold for retail impact assessments	All	No specific impact – As for TC 1
Policy TC 6: Darlington - Town Centre Fringe Identifies a regeneration priority area on the north west edge of the town centre suitable for housing and employment development, access improvements, flood mitigation work/greening the riverside corridor and cleaning up contaminated land.	Air Quality	No specific impact – The Town Centre Fringe area is highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, so encouraging people to live, work and travel there may reduce car travel which impacts upon air quality. Access improvements should encourage more walking and cycling between the centre and northern/eastern parts of the town.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Development of this area on the edge of the town centre is likely to result in the remediation of contaminated land which will help to improve water quality and reduce the risk of pollution of groundwater. Improvements to the River Skerne corridor present the opportunity to reduce pollution from adjacent areas, which are currently mainly highways and business premises.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Development would provide an opportunity to improve the management of drainage from the area. The policy would lead to a net decrease in hard surfaces, in particular close to the Skerne.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact - May reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through promotion of Darlington town centre as a visitor destination
	Climate Change	No specific impact – The Town Centre Fringe area is highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, so encouraging people to live, work and travel there may reduce car travel and thereby greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficiency improvements to existing/new buildings in the area will also reduce emissions. Access improvements should encourage more walking and cycling between the centre and northern/eastern parts of the town.
CHAPTER 9: ENVIRONMENT		
Policy ENV 1: Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment	Air quality	No specific impact – Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – By preserving local heritage this policy will help to encourage tourism which may help to relieve visitor pressure on Natura 2000 sites. Would not cause any change to factors affecting habitats and species.
	Climate Change	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting climate change.
Policy ENV 2: Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) Concerned with the preservation and interpretation of physical remains relating to the S&DR, and the reinstatement of the route	Air quality	No specific impact – Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – By preserving local heritage this policy will help to encourage tourism which may help to relieve visitor pressure on Natura 2000 sites. Would not cause any change to factors affecting habitats and species.
	Climate Change	No specific impact - Heritage related policy only. Would not cause any change to factors affecting climate change.
Policy ENV 3: Local Landscape Character Protects and seeks the enhancement of areas identified for their landscape and amenity value, and also encourages landscape improvement of the rural landscape	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will help to protect air quality by protecting and enhancing woodland and green corridors across the borough.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Will protect and improve green corridors (and green wedges in Darlington), many of which follow watercourses, so should have a beneficial effect on water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Will protect green corridors (and green wedges in Darlington) which help to act as water stores.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Will reduce disturbance to species that may be travelling to or from a Natura 2000 site by protecting and enhancing green corridors (and green Wedges in Darlington), including the Tees corridor which is a bird flight path of county level importance. These improvements should also reduce the frequency with which Darlington residents visit Natura 2000 sites, by providing strategic level green infrastructure and alternative natural destinations closer to home.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Will increase the ability of species to adapt to climate change through enabling sufficient movement along green corridors.
Policy ENV 4: Green Infrastructure Protects and seeks to enhance green and blue infrastructure in the borough	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will protect air quality by protecting and enhancing woodland, green corridors and green spaces across the borough. In addition, new development will be required to provide new green infrastructure.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Will ensure that developments comply with environmental standards in terms of their impact on water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific Impact – Will protect green corridors (and green wedges in Darlington) which help to act as water stores. Many green corridors follow watercourses, so their retention and enhancement should have a beneficial effect on hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Will reduce disturbance to species that may be travelling to or from a Natura 2000 site by protecting and enhancing green corridors (and green wedges in Darlington), including the Tees corridor which is a bird flight path of county level importance. These improvements should also reduce the frequency with which Darlington residents visit Natura 2000 sites, by providing strategic level green infrastructure and alternative natural destinations closer to home.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Will increase the ability of species to adapt to climate change through enabling movement along green corridors.
Policy ENV 5: Green Infrastructure Standards Sets standards and priorities for the provision of green infrastructure as part of development	All	No specific impact – As for ENV 4
Policy ENV 6: Local Green Space Identifies a number of sites to be allocated as Local Green Space and protected accordingly	All	No specific impact – As for ENV 4
Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development Policy to secure a net gain in biodiversity through development, identify and improve sites and corridors of biodiversity importance and set criteria for development close to them	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will protect air quality by protecting and enhancing wildlife sites, woodland and other green infrastructure across the borough.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Will protect and improve watercourses and wetland areas incorporating surface water management and flood water storage.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Will protect and improve watercourses and wetland areas incorporating surface water management and flood water storage.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Will reduce disturbance to species that may be traveling to or from a Natura 2000 site by protecting and extending priority habitats. Will help improve green corridors including the Tees corridor which is a bird flight path of county level importance.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Will increase the ability of species to adapt to climate change through enabling movement through habitats.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
Policy ENV 8: Assessing a Developments Impact on Biodiversity Sets out the evidence required to support development proposals likely to affect biodiversity	All	No specific impact – As for ENV 7. .
Policy ENV 9: Outdoor Sports Facilities Seeks to make effective use of the network of sports facilities in the borough, protecting existing facilities and setting the criteria for developing new facilities	Air Quality	No specific impact – Through maintaining and improving local sports provision, it will reduce the need for residents to travel to sports and recreation facilities further afield so should help to reduce air pollution from motor vehicle related emissions.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Playing pitches could potentially serve as flood storage provided good drainage provision.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – May provide foraging area for any representatives of priority species from the Natura 2000 sites that visit Darlington.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Does not require new sports complexes to meet local needs which could generate large numbers of traffic movements. Through maintaining and improving local sports provisi reduce the need for residents to travel to sports and recreation facili afield so should help to reduce air pollution from motor vehicle relate emissions.
CHAPTER 10: TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
Policy IN 1: Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network Identifies priorities for different forms of transport in order to deliver a sustainable transport network across the borough	Air Quality	Some of the transport projects planned, for example increasing the capacity of the A66 around Darlington, are likely to increase localised air pollution from motor vehicles. However, increasing the capacity of the borough's roads to accommodate the expected growth in vehicle movements will help to keep vehicles moving, reducing the time they are idling at junctions and in traffic. A large element of the policy is dedicated to the promotion and delivery of more sustainable forms of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) which will help to reduce any increase in air pollution resulting from new development over the plan period. Most of the highway improvement set out in the policy are related to accommodating increases in local traffic movements in and around Darlington town. However, there are proposals to deliver a Northern Link Road between the A1(M) and A66 on the north side of the town that will improve access from the A1(M) to the wider Tees Valley and Teesport. Conversely, this will help ease congestion and improve air quality along the A1150 and A167 on the north side of Darlington. Pollution to air from increased use of roads may impact on Natura 2000 sites.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Increased use of roads in the borough resulting from highway improvements and traffic growth related to developments could increase/speed-up surface water runoff from roads which could impact on water quality and downstream Natura 2000 sites. However, developments will need to comply with national design guidance and requirements for highway drainage systems, one of the three main principles of which is to minimise the impact of runoff on the receiving environment in terms of flood risk and water quality. In addition, the potential for any impacts from new roads associated with new development on water quality will be minimised through the application of policies DC 4 and ENV 4.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – As above.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Should the Northern Link Road be delivered, this will improve access from the A1(M) to the Tees Valley area and Natura 2000 sites along the coast, potentially increasing recreational pressure on these sites. Increased traffic on Darlington's roads could cause disturbance to species travelling to and from Natura 2000 sites.
	Climate Change	Some of the transport projects planned, for example increasing the capacity of the A66 around Darlington, are likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. However, increasing the capacity of the borough's roads to accommodate the expected growth in vehicle movements will help to keep vehicles moving, reducing the time they are idling at junctions and in traffic. A large element of the policy is dedicated to the promotion and delivery of more sustainable forms of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) which will help to reduce any increase in emissions resulting from new development over the plan period. Most of the highway improvement set out in the policy are related to accommodating increases in local traffic movements in and around Darlington town. However, there are proposals to deliver a Northern Link Road between the A1(M) and A66 on the north side of the town that will improve access from the A1(M) to the wider Tees Valley and Teesport. Conversely, this will help ease congestion and improve air quality along the A1150 and A167 on the north side of Darlington. Greenhouse gas emissions from increased use of roads may impact on Natura 2000 sites.
Policy IN 2: Improving Access and Accessibility Includes criteria for new developments to improve access and accessibility	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will limit increases in motor travel arising from new development by promoting more sustainable forms of travel, helping keep air pollution lower than it would otherwise be.
	Water Quality	No specific impact - Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact - Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – By encouraging leisure cycling and walking in Darlington the policy may reduce demand for visiting Natura 2000 sites.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Will limit increases in motor travel arising from new development, helping keep greenhouse gas emissions lower than they would otherwise be.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
Policy IN 3: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans Sets out the evidence required to support major development proposals	All	No specific impact – Policy relates to the evidence required by applicants and does not itself make specific policy provisions. Travel Plans and Transport Assessments should result in an improvement in the choice of transport choices and encourage the use of more sustainable travel options (i.e. public transport, vehicle sharing, walking and cycling).
Policy IN 4: Parking Provision including Electric Vehicle Charging Requires appropriate provision of safe and secure vehicle parking and servicing on new developments, and the provision of electric vehicle charging points in most new residential properties and on large scale non-residential developments	Air Quality	No specific impact – By encouraging electric car use the policy will have a positive effect on air quality in the borough.
	Water Quality	No specific impact - Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact - Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting disturbance.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – By encouraging electric car use the policy will have a positive effect on greenhouse gas emissions in the borough.
Policy IN 5: Airport Safety Incorporates the public safety and consultation zones required in the vicinity the Darlington Tees Valley Airport	Air Quality	No specific impact – The policy is related to the enforcement of the Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone and Public Safety Zone only and not with the level of use or operation of the airport. As such, it would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – The requirements of the policy may lead to limits being placed on developments that would be likely to attract certain bird species in the vicinity of the airport (such as the creation of new habitats). However, such restrictions would not negatively affect the current integrity of Natura 2000 sites, and in any event, Natura 2000 site qualifying species found in the borough (primarily Lapwing and Redshank) are not among the bird species that these restrictions would be targeted at.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – The policy is related to the enforcement of the Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone and Public Safety Zone only and not with the level of use or operation of the airport. As such, it would not cause any change to factors affecting climate change.
Policy IN 6: Utilities Infrastructure Protects the capacity of utilities networks	Air Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting air quality
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would help protect water quality by protecting the capacity of waste water networks and treatment facilities.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would help protect hydrology by protecting the capacity of water supply networks.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting disturbance.

Theme	Impact Type	Rationale
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting climate change.
Policy IN 7: Telecommunication Masts Sets out criteria against which proposals for electronic communications infrastructure will be considered	All	No specific impact – The policy deals with the control of new telecommunications infrastructure and stipulates that development should not have an unacceptable effect on areas of ecological interest amongst other measures. As a result it is unlikely to lead to result in any impact on Natura 2000 sites.
Policy IN 8: Broadband Infrastructure Requires larger scale residential and employment development to provide broadband connectivity and ducts	All	No specific impact – The policy requires larger residential development to provide for broadband connectivity and ducts. As a result it is unlikely to lead to result in any impact on Natura 2000 sites.
Policy IN 9: Renewable and Energy Efficient Infrastructure Provides support for renewable and energy infrastructure and the criteria against which schemes will be considered	Air Quality	No specific impact – District heating schemes will be required to meet emission control standards.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Commercial scale hydro power schemes are unlikely to be feasible. The policy requires applications for hydropower to be accompanied by Flood Risk Assessment and for early engagement to take place with the Environment Agency.
	Hydrology	As above.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	Turning blades on wind turbines could strike birds travelling to and from Natura 2000 sites.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – Renewable and energy efficient infrastructure will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels to generate energy.
Policy IN 10: Supporting the Delivery of Community and Social Infrastructure Sets criteria for new education facilities, community, arts/cultural and indoor sports development Protects local community facilities.	Air Quality	No specific impact – By protecting local community facilities, the policy should reduce the need for travel to facilities further afield, therefore reducing emissions that will impact on air quality.
	Water Quality	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting water quality.
	Hydrology	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting hydrology.
	Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Would not cause any change to factors affecting habitats and species.
	Climate Change	No specific impact – By protecting local community facilities, the policy should reduce the need for travel to facilities further afield, therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

2.4.2 Table 1 identifies that the emerging Local Plan policies that will be investigated for potential significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

- Policy SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy H 1 Housing Requirement
- Policy H 2 Housing Allocations

- Policy H 8 Housing Intensification
- Policy H 9 Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation
- Policy H 10 Skerningham - Strategic Site Allocation
- Policy H 11 Greater Faverdale - Strategic Site Allocation
- Policy E 2 Employment Allocations
- Policy E 3 Darlington Farmers Auction Mart Relocation
- Policy IN 1 Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network
- Policy IN 2 Improving Access and Accessibility
- Policy IN 9 Renewable Energy Infrastructure

3. Identification and Description of Natura 2000 Sites

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 When assessing the impact of a plan on Natura 2000 sites it is important to consider the impact on Natura 2000 sites not only within the area the plan is to be implemented- there are none in the borough of Darlington- but also Natura 2000 sites outside of the plan boundary that still could be affected by the plan. There is no defined distance within which Natura 2000 sites could be affected by a plan, and potentially a plan could impact upon a site a significant distance away from the plan area. Consequently the catchment area within which Natura 2000 sites could be affected by the plan should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Once the potential impact types have been identified, the pathways by which those effects might reach Natura 2000 sites will be investigated and then the Natura 2000 sites which might be reached by those pathways can be identified and described.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 A methodology has been developed to determine which Natura 2000 sites should be included for screening for Appropriate Assessment. It will assess the criteria listed below:

- Identify the likelihood for impacts to arise from the Draft Local Plan that could have an impact on a Natura 2000 site by analysing the contents of the plan. This is given in table 1 in the previous section of this report.
- Identify possible pathways for development in Darlington borough to affect Natura 2000 sites: air, water, road and air traffic, the movement of wildlife and the movement of people, and consider the likelihood of impacts reaching the Natura 2000 sites along each of those pathways

3.2.2 All of the above will be considered to determine if development and activity in the borough related to the Draft Local Plan could potentially affect Natura 2000 sites. Sites identified through this process will be considered in the screening assessment to determine if the Draft Local Plan requires full Appropriate Assessment.

3.3 Impact Type

3.3.1 Type of impacts, previously discussed, that could emerge from the Draft Local Plan are as follows:

- Air quality
- Water quality
- Hydrology
- Species movement
- Recreational pressure
- Climate change

Further details are given in Table 1 earlier in this report.

3.4 Distance

3.4.1 Figure 1 shows the location of Natura 2000 sites within Darlington Borough and within 25km (at 5km intervals) of the Borough boundary. It shows there are no sites within the Borough, no sites within 5km and only one site within 10km of the borough. Consequently it is very unlikely that noise and dust pollution originating in the borough as a consequence of the Draft Local Plan would impact a Natura 2000 site. Despite the long distance between the Borough and the Natura 2000 sites, there is some potential for impacts by transportation of gas emissions by the south-westerly wind. Consequently Natura 2000 sites to the north east of the borough will be included in the screening process. This includes Thrislington SAC, Castle Eden Dene SAC, Durham Coast SAC and Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar in Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland boroughs.

3.5 Rivers

3.5.1 Figure 2 shows the rivers that flow from Darlington Borough. It shows that a number of rivers crossing the Darlington borough flow through Natura 2000 sites or to another river that flows through Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites that are linked to the Borough by river include Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA / Ramsar, which is linked by rivers including including Billingham Beck, Lustrum Beck and the River Tees. Activities proposed by the Draft Local Plan near the banks of these rivers could impact upon this site in terms of waterborne pollution and hydrology, although the allocation of green corridors along most of the watercourses in the Borough, and nearly all in the urban area, should minimise this impact (see Figure 5). The River Tees flows through part of the Pennine Moors and the North Pennine Dales Meadows but as it they are 20km or more upstream of Darlington, activities suggested in the Draft Local Plan will not have an impact on this site. There are no other Natura 2000 sites that have rivers that flow through them from Darlington Borough.

3.6 Roads

3.6.1 Figure 3 shows the roads linking Darlington Borough to other areas of population. Research has shown that emissions from road traffic from motorways and major roads

should generally have dispersed sufficiently that atmospheric concentrations reach background level beyond 200m; therefore emissions from motorways can be higher than background levels within 200m of a major road. The rate of decline is steeply curved with concentrations declining rapidly as one begins to move away from the roadside with a more gradual decline as you near 200m. Based on advice in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges[1] emissions only needed to be considered if there is a road carrying a significant proportion of new traffic related to the plan within 200m of a European site. Natura 2000 sites within 200m of a major road could therefore be damaged as a consequence of higher than normal levels of pollutants from vehicle emissions. This assumption has also been applied to pollutants from other types of development.

3.6.2 As there are no Natura 2000 sites within Darlington Borough, if Natura 2000 sites are to be affected by increased traffic generation it will occur as a result of traffic travelling to and from the Borough from locations outside the Borough. Figure 3 identifies the main centres of population outside of Darlington Borough and the main roads linking these centres to Darlington. The main centres of population are within the Tees Valley including Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. Other potential centres are those to the north in Tyne and Wear and centres in North Yorkshire, both accessed by the A1. Figure 3 shows that the main routes between these centres and Darlington do not pass within 200m of a Natura 2000 Site. Consequently it is unlikely increased traffic generation as a consequence of the Draft Local Plan will impact a Natura 2000 site.

3.7 Air Traffic

3.7.1 In order to assess operational air quality impacts on sites a study area needs to take account of where aircraft are likely to be flying below 100m on take-off and approach, and where changes in traffic flow due to expansion are likely to have an impact upon air quality. As a result the study area considered by the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Durham Tees Valley Airport covered an 8km x 8km square from the airport and was located between Darlington and Stockton. This study area does not fall within the vicinity of a Natura 2000 site.

3.8 Species Movement

3.8.1 Figure 4 shows the distance between the borough and Natura 2000 sites. The distance between the Borough and Natura 2000 sites means it is unlikely that species movement to and from Natura 2000 sites will be affected by the Local Plan. Of the qualifying species on those Natura 2000 sites closest to Darlington, Lapwing and Redshank have been regularly recorded in the borough, and the River Tees corridor is a known flight path of county level importance for birds in general (it is not known whether for those species in particular) which links the borough to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site. However, the Local Plan is not expected to have a

[1] Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3 Part 1 (HA207/07) and subsequent Interim Advice Notes

negative impact either on Lapwing, Redshank or on the River Tees corridor. The document continues the policy of restricting development in the countryside; protects and sets out measure to improve green infrastructure in the River Tees corridor and its vicinity, which are likely to increase its usefulness to bird species; and does not propose any allocations of housing or employment development there.

3.9 Recreational Pressure

3.9.1 Many Natura 2000 sites are vulnerable to recreational pressure, i.e. disturbance by visitors, chiefly of plants underfoot or of birds using the site. Increasing the number of residents in the visitor catchment area of Natura 2000 sites can sometimes therefore affect site integrity. Adjacent authorities through their Habitats Regulations assessments have identified the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site as having the potential to be affected by recreational pressure from additional residents, while the upland Natura 2000 sites (North Pennine Moors SPA/SAC, North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC and Moor House Upper Teesdale SAC) to the west of the Borough were identified as less vulnerable to recreational pressure from new development. Of the HRAs of neighbourings authorities, the County Durham Plan Habitat Regulations Assessment adopts the most pessimistic approach, assuming that the recreational catchment for coastal sites, including the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site, stretches to 24km within which the majority of visitors travel (and therefore pressure arises) between 0-6km of the coast. As Figure 1 shows, no part of the Borough lies within 6km of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site, or indeed of any Natura 2000 site, and the great majority of the Borough, including Darlington town, is at least 15km from them. In addition, as well as allocating housing land to accommodate a growing population, the emerging Local Plan allocates and protects a significant network of green infrastructure, and includes a requirement for major developments to deliver new wildlife friendly greenspace as part of development. This should provide Darlington residents with an attractive alternative to visiting Natura 2000 sites further afield. It is therefore unlikely that increased population as a result of the Local Plan will have any impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site through visitor pressure.

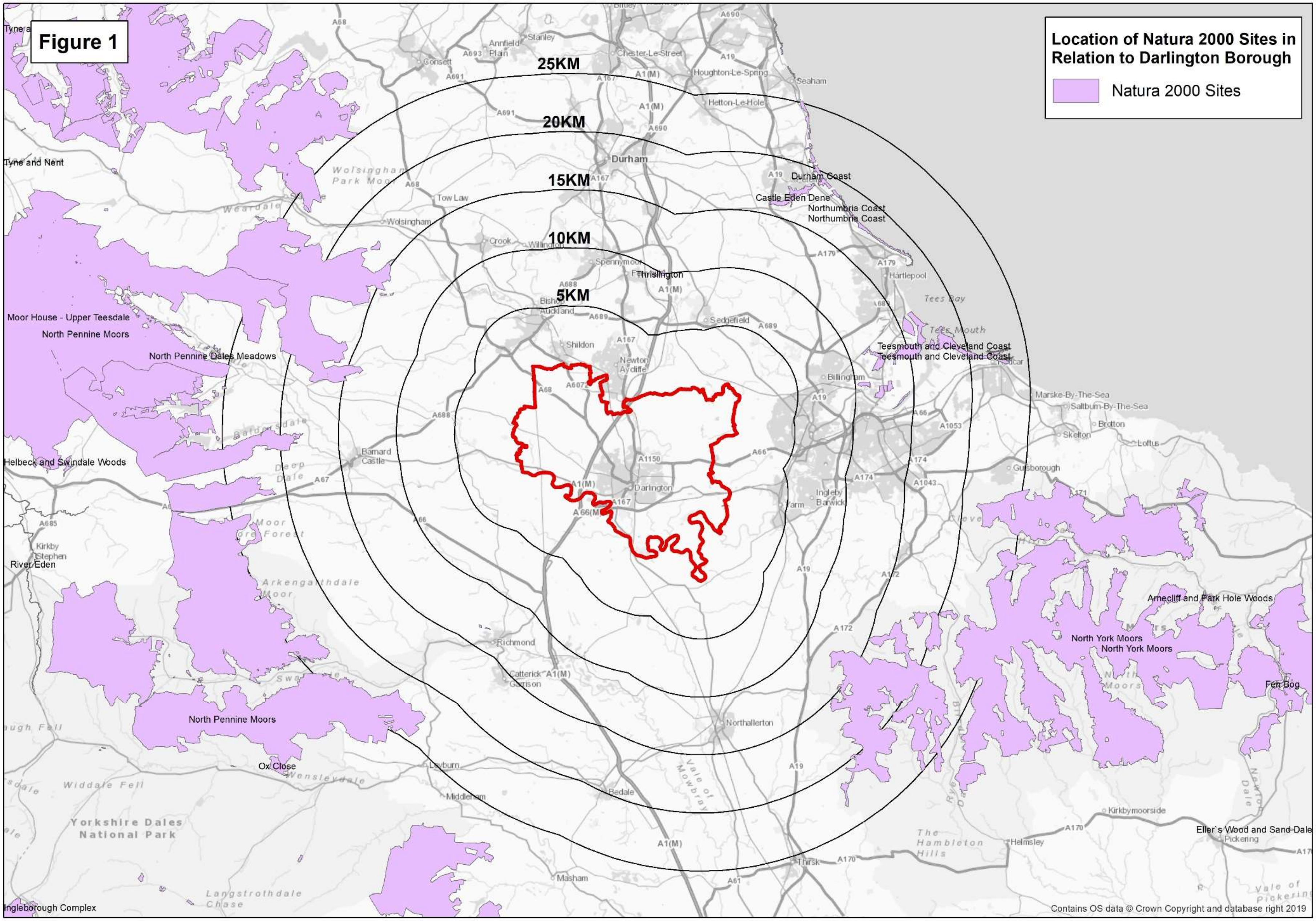
Figure 1
Location of Natura 2000 Sites in Relation to Darlington Borough
Natura 2000 Sites
25KM
20KM
15KM
10KM
5KM
Tyne and Nent
Moor House - Upper Teesdale
North Pennine Moors
North Pennine Dales Meadows
Helbeck and Swindale Woods
River Eden
North Pennine Moors
Ox Close
Ingleborough Complex
Durham Coast
Castle Eden Dene
Northumbria Coast
Northumbria Coast
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Arnecliff and Park Hole Woods
North York Moors
North York Moors
Fen Bog
Eller`s Wood and Sand Dale
Yorkshire Dales
National Park
Durham
Darlington
Richmond
Northallerton
Barnard Castle
Shildon
Hartlepool
Thirsk
Helmsley
Kirkbymoorside
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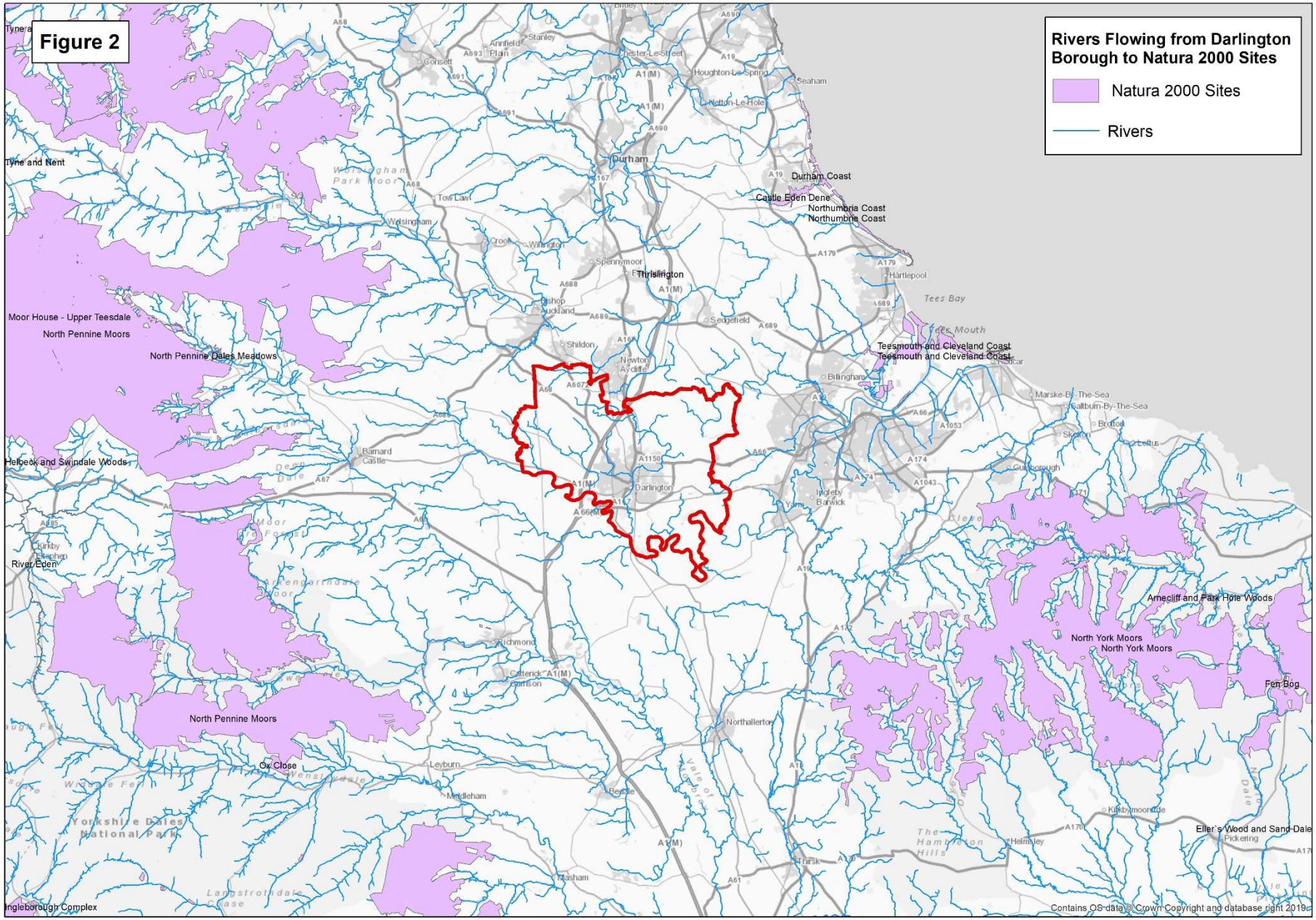
Figure 2
Rivers Flowing from Darlington Borough to Natura 2000 Sites
Natura 2000 Sites
Rivers
Durham
Durham Coast
Castle Eden Dene
Northumbria Coast
Northumbria Coast
Hartlepool
Tees Bay
Tees Mouth
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Darlington
Richmond
Northallerton
Thirsk
Helmsley
Pickering
Tyne and Nent
Moor House - Upper Teesdale
North Pennine Moors
North Pennine Dales Meadows
Helbeck and Swindale Woods
River Eden
North Pennine Moors
Ox Close
Arncliff and Park Hole Woods
North York Moors
North York Moors
Fen Bog
Eller's Wood and Sand Dale
Yorkshire Dales National Park
Ingleborough Complex
Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2019

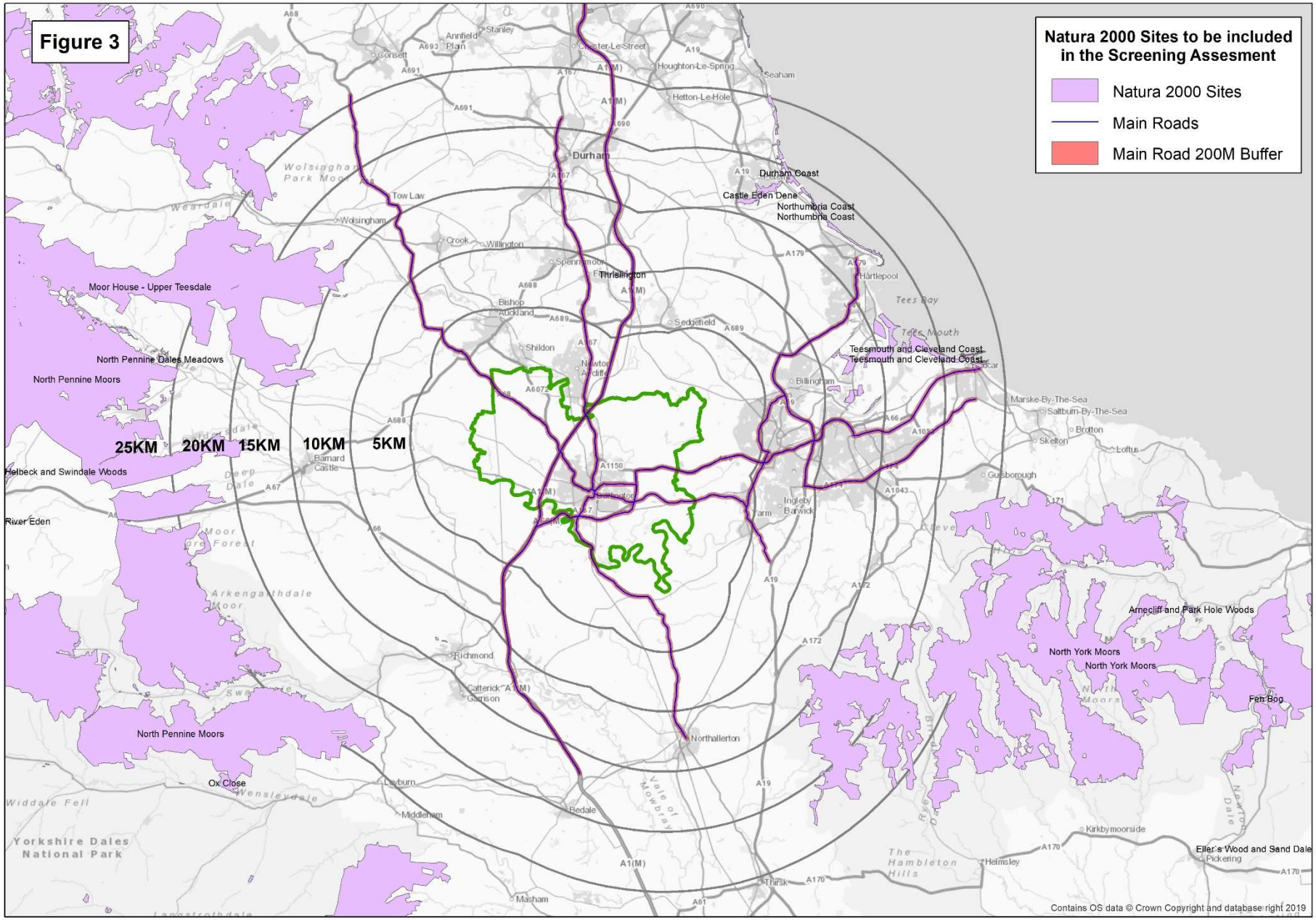
Figure 3
Natura 2000 Sites to be included in the Screening Assesment
Natura 2000 Sites
Main Roads
Main Road 200M Buffer
25KM
20KM
15KM
10KM
5KM
Durham
Durham Coast
Castle Eden Dene
Northumbria Coast
Northumbria Coast
Moor House - Upper Teesdale
North Pennine Dales Meadows
North Pennine Moors
Helbeck and Swindale Woods
River Eden
North Pennine Moors
Ox Close
Yorkshire Dales National Park
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Arnecliff and Park Hole Woods
North York Moors
North York Moors
Fen Bog
Eller's Wood and Sand Dale
Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2019

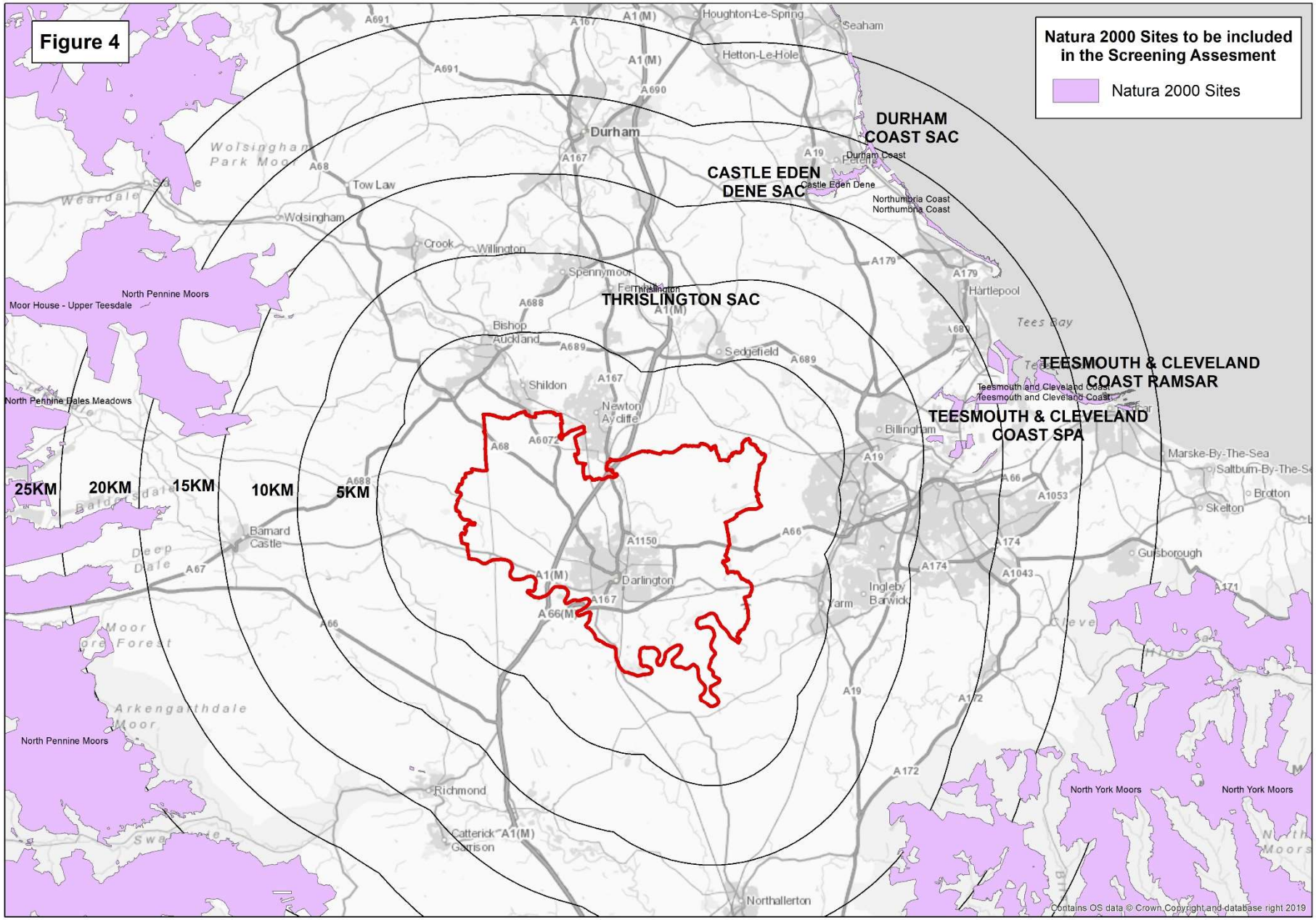
Figure 4
Natura 2000 Sites to be included in the Screening Assesment
Natura 2000 Sites
DURHAM COAST SAC
CASTLE EDEN DENE SAC
THRISLINGTON SAC
TEESMOUTH & CLEVELAND COAST RAMSAR
TEESMOUTH & CLEVELAND COAST SPA
25KM
20KM
15KM
10KM
5KM
Durham
Darlington
Richmond
Northallerton
Hartlepool
Billingham
Seaham
Houghton-Le-Spring
Hetton-Le-Hole
Wolsingham
Crook
Willington
Spennymoor
Bishop Auckland
Sedgefield
Shildon
Newton Aycliffe
Barnard Castle
Tow Law
Catterick Garrison
Ingleby Barwick
Skelton
Guisborough
Marske-By-The-Sea
Brotton
North Pennine Moors
North Pennine Dales Meadows
North York Moors
Durham Coast
Castle Eden Dene
Northumbria Coast
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
Tees Bay
Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2019

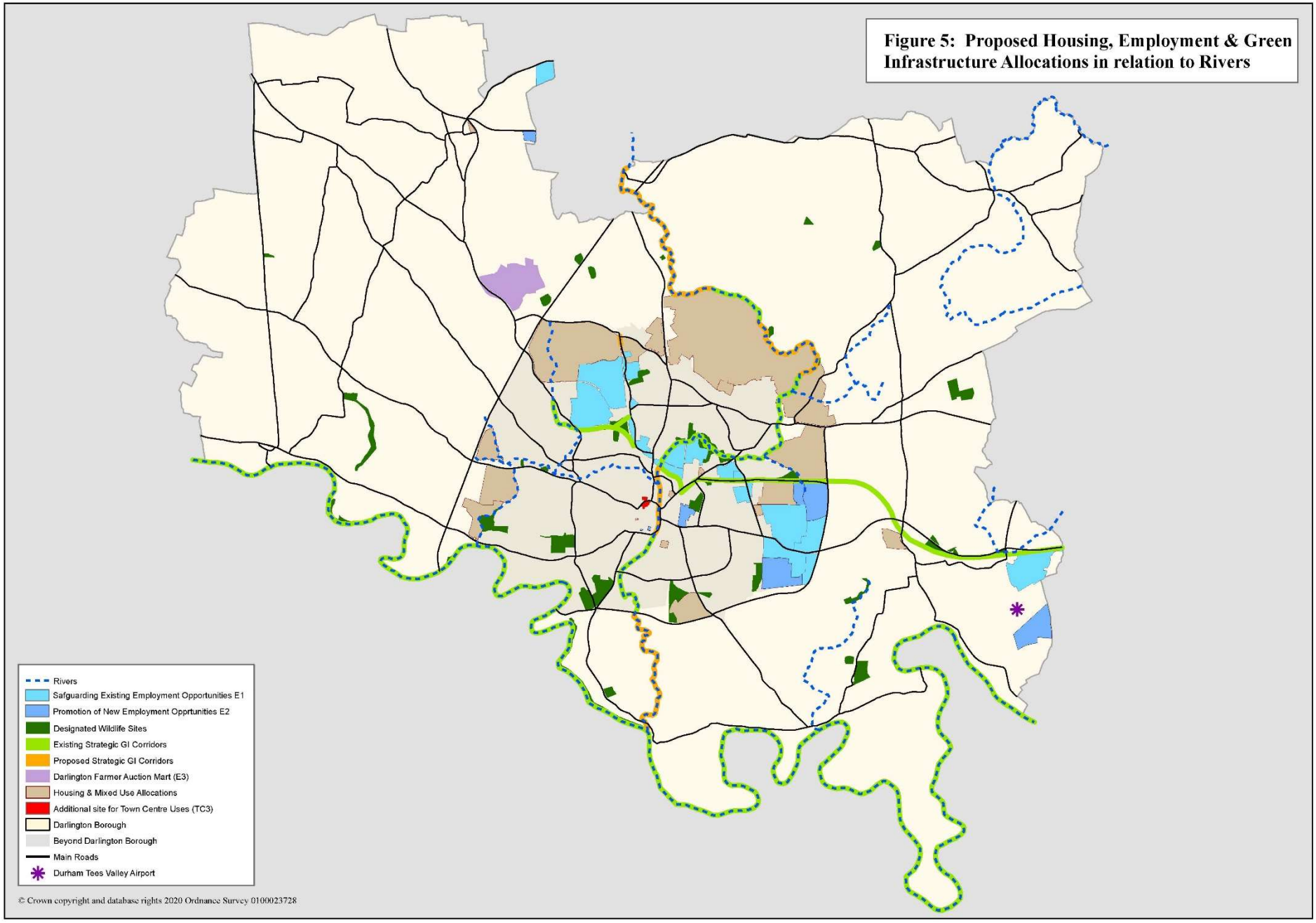
Figure 5: Proposed Housing, Employment & Green Infrastructure Allocations in relation to Rivers
Rivers
Safguarding Existing Employment Opportunities E1
Promotion of New Employment Opprtunities E2
Designated Wildlife Sites
Existing Strategic GI Corridors
Proposed Strategic GI Corridors
Darlington Farmer Auction Mart (E3)
Housing & Mixed Use Allocations
Additional site for Town Centre Uses (TC3)
Darlington Borough
Beyond Darlington Borough
Main Roads
Durham Tees Valley Airport
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4. Natura 2000 Sites To Be Assessed

4.1 Sites

4.1.1 Based on the assessment in the previous section of the report, the Natura 2000 sites listed below are to be included in the screening assessment. These sites include:

- Castle Eden Dene SAC, County Durham
- Thrislington SAC, County Durham
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, Hartlepool
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland
- Durham Coast SAC, Easington

4.1.2 To understand the potential impacts of the Local Plan on the Natura 2000 sites it is important to understand the following key factors about each site:

- Description of each site in terms of species and habitats it contains.
- Conservation objectives of each site
- Aspects of the site that are vulnerable and could be particularly sensitive to change in the environment.

4.1.3 Tables 2 to 6 provide this information for each of the identified Natura 2000 sites. A number of data sources were used to compile this data. The data sources used are listed below:

- Joint Nature Conservation Committee: www.jncc.gov.uk
- Natural England, Site Improvement Plans: North East: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6280398447312896
- Natural England Open Data Geoportal: https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/
- Natural England MAGIC: http://magic.defra.gov.uk/

Table 2: Thrislington SAC

Thrislington SAC		
Site Code: UK0012838	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 22.58 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
The whole of Thrislington SAC is located within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates** *(Festuco-Brometalia)* Thrislington is a relatively small site but contains the largest of the few surviving stands of CG8 Sesleria albicans - Scabiosa columbaria grassland *(Source: JNCC, Natura 2000 Data form for Thrislington SAC as submitted to Europe, via JNCC website)*	To maintain, in favourable Condition: the unimproved calcareous grassland, with particular reference to semi natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (CG8 grasslands) *(Source: English Nature's, SAC: Thrislington Component SSSI: Thrislington Plantation Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	The conditions of these grasslands are dependent upon continuous management by seasonally-adjusted grazing and no fertiliser input. The site is now a National Nature Reserve and management on these traditional lines has been reintroduced at the site. The site is fairly stable and therefore there are little vulnerabilities. Strategies increasing the population, the amount of traffic and development are likely to exacerbate air quality impacts. The vegetation composition and structure is also at risk of being affected by increased nutrient inputs.

Table 3: Durham Coast SAC

Durham Coast SAC		
Site Code: UK0030140	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 393.63 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts**. The only example of vegetated sea cliffs on Magnesian limestone exposures in the UK. These cliffs extend along the North Sea coast for over 20km from South Shields southwards to Blackhall Rocks. Within these habitats rare species of contrasting phytogeographic distributions often grow together forming unusual and species-rich communities of high conservation interest. The communities present on the sea cliffs are largely maintained by natural processes including exposure to sea spray, erosion and slippage of the soft Magnesian limestone bedrock and overlying glacial drifts, as well as localised flushing by calcareous water. Parts of the site are managed as a National Nature Reserve, and plans provide for the non-interventionist management of the vegetated cliffs. The majority of the site is in public ownership and an agreed management plan is being developed to protect nature conservation interests. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form Durham Coast SAC, via JNCC website)*	Subject to natural change, to maintain, in favourable condition, the: vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts. This can be done by; maintaining the overall length and/or area of habitat with no increase in linear extent maintaining a range of physical conditions on the site, continued range of maritime grasslands and community transitions no further increase in species not normally associated with this community in the UK. *(Source, English Nature, SPA: Northumbria Coast, SPA: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast, SAC: Durham Coast Component SSSI: Durham Coast Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	Vegetated sea cliffs range from vertical cliffs in the north with scattered vegetated ledges, to the Magnesian Limestone grassland slopes of the south. The site is currently affected by, or at risk from increasing physical constraints which would reduce the mobility of the cliffs and reduce the range of communities. Any changes in the composition of cliff vegetation communities will damage site integrity.

Table 4: Castle Eden Dene SAC

Castle Eden Dene SAC		
Site Code: UK0012768	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 194.4 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Taxus baccata woodland** Castle Eden Dene in north-east England represents the most extensive northerly native occurrence of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the UK. Extensive yew groves are found in association with ash-elm *Fraxinus-Ulmus* woodland and it is the only site selected for yew woodland on Magnesian limestone in north-east England. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form for Castle Eden Dene SAC, via JNCC website)*	To maintain, in favourable condition, the Taxus baccata woodland. This can be done by; ensuring no loss of ancient semi natural stands Site management Limiting air pollution Limiting grazing by ungulates where it leads to undesirable shifts in the composition/structure of the land. *(Source, English Nature, cSAC: Castle Eden Dene Component SSSI: Castle Eden Dene Conservation objectives for the European interests on the SSSI, 2006)*	Yew woodlands are distributed throughout the site in a matrix of other woodland types. The site is managed as a National Nature Reserve and the Management Plan provides for regeneration of this special woodland type. Site management is essential to maintain the current level and structural diversity. It is currently affected and at risk from pollution, including eutrophication from adjacent farmland; whilst excessive browsing/grazing may lead to undesirable changes in composition and structure. Increased air pollution is likely to damage site integrity through disease of trees and an associated increase in the rate of Taxus baccatamortality in the long term.

Table 5: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA		
Site Code: UK9006061	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 1247.31 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast includes a range of coastal habitats – sand- and mud-flats, rocky shore, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh and sand dunes – on and around an estuary which has been considerably modified by human activities. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons,* during breeding season, 37 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (4 year mean1993-1996). **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*, on passage, 2,190 individuals representing at least 5.2% of the population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1991-1995) Supporting criterion for; **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*, on passage, 634 individuals representing at least 1.3% of the Europe/Northern Africa – wintering population (5 yr mean spring 91 95) (On Passage) **Knot** *Calidris canutus*, Over winter, 4,190 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering Northeastern Canada/Greenland/Iceland/North estern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) **Redshank** *Tringa totanus*, over winter, 1,648 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the	The Conservation Objectives are to maintain, in favourable condition; the habitats for populations of Annex 1 [Wild Birds Directive] (Little Tern) species of European importance, with particular reference to : - intertidal sand and mudflats - sand dunes - coastal waters The habitats for the populations of migratory bird species (Redshank and Knot) of European importance, with particular reference to: - rocky shores - intertidal sand and mudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh The habitats for the populations of waterfowl that contribute to the wintering waterfowl assemblage of European importance, with particular reference to: - rocky shores - intertidal sand and mudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh - standing water This can be done by; maintaining food availability suitable areas for breeding terns lack of disturbance maintenance of hydrology and flow, suitable water depth *(Source, English Nature, SPA: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast (Extended Area) Component SSSI: Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	Disturbance caused by offshore/marine activity is a key issue for designated species – this may take the form of recreational use of surrounding waters. This site is influenced by chemical discharges from industrial use along the Tees and from nutrient enrichment from agricultural use of the Tees Valley. Increased nitrogen deposition is likely to have a negative affect on the site. It is likely to alter the vegetation structure and composition, and reduce the area of un-vegetated beach suitable for nesting Little Tern. Increased recreational use of waters surrounding the site is likely to affect Tern breeding success. Reduced water quality may affect the invertebrate populations supporting wintering and breeding birds.

wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 87-91) Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance. The area qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl. Over winter, the area regularly supports 21,406 individual **waterfowl** (5 year peak mean 1991/2 -1995/6) including: Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*,Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Knot *Calidris canutus*. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form for Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, via JNCC website)*		

Table 6: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar		
Site Code: UK11068	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 1247.31 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast includes a range of coastal habitats – sand- and mud-flats, rocky shore, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh and sand dunes – on and around an estuary which has been considerably modified by human activities. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Waterfowl**, internationally important numbers of passage /winter water birds at designation: 9258 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99 –2002/2003). **Common redshank**, (Tringa tetanus totanus):883 individuals, representing an average of 0.7 % of the UK population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) **Red knot** (Calidris canutus islandica).(migrating from West and Southern Africa) (wintering): 2579 individuals, representing an average of 0.9 % of the UK population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Supporting criteria for designation: **Little Tern** *(Sternula albifrons albifrons)*nationally important numbers of breeding (40 pairs, circa 2% of the national population) Passage species of importance (at designation): **Northern shoveler** *(Anas clypeata)* (migrating between NW and C Europe): 7 individuals representing an average of 0% of	Whilst no information is available on the conservation objectives they are likely to be similar to Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA The Conservation Objectives are to maintain, in favourable condition; the habitats for populations of Annex 1 [Wild Birds Directive] (Little Tern) species of European importance, with particular reference to : - intertidal sand and mudflats - sand dunes - coastal waters The habitats for the populations of migratory bird species (Redshank) of European importance, with particular reference to: - rocky shores - intertidal sand and mudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh	The site is currently affected by nitrogen enrichment from sewage discharges, encroachment of scrub into dune habitats, disturbance from recreational use of the site and incursion of coarse marine sediment into estuary – however, the latter is a natural process. Disturbance caused by offshore/marine activity is a key issue for designated species. This may take the form of recreational use of surrounding waters which is likely to affect Tern breeding success. Reduced water quality may affect the invertebrate populations supporting wintering and breeding birds.

the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3); **Common greenshank** *(Tringa nebularia),*(migrating between Europe and West Africa): 7 individuals representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3). Nationally important invertebrates (British Red Data Book species): Pherbellia grisecens, Thereva valida, Longitarsus nigerrimus Dryops nitidulus, Macroplea mutica, Philonthus dimidiatipennis Trichohydnobius suturalis Nationally scarce higher plants: Festuca arenaria, Puccinellia rupestris, Ranunculus baudotii *(Source: JNCC, Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) via JNCC website)*		

5. Consideration of In-Combination Effects

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Even where a plan on its own may not have a significant impact on a European site, it may have a significant 'in combination' impact with other trends, plans and projects. However it is important to note that if the impact of the emerging Local Plan is expected to de minimis it is not necessary to consider in combination impacts. Appropriate Assessment of Plans (2006) by Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants et al. advises that: If the plan plus existing trends alone are unlikely to significantly affect a site, then the effects of other plans and projects do not need to be considered. A review of neighbouring authorities HRA work and potential in-combination effects is provided below.

5.2 Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan

5.2.1 The HRA of Stockton Borough Council's Local Plan adopted in 2019 identified thirteen policies where a LSE upon the European sites could not be ruled out. These impacts related to three impact pathways: a potential reduction in air quality both directly from traffic and impacts from diffuse pollution, an indirect loss of potential pSPA habitat, and recreation impacts from an increase in visitors to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site. One potential LSE highlighted by the Stockton HRA was the potential for the expansion of Durham Tees Valley Airport to impact upon European sites, but in particular the North York Moors SAC/SPA and the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar/potential pSPA sites through a deterioration in air quality. These impact pathways were subsequently considered at the Appropriate Assessment stage which concluded that, subject considered mitigation measures built into policies of the Local Plan and consenting legal framework, it will not give rise to any adverse effects upon the integrity of any European sites.

5.2.2 In terms of in combination effects the Stockton HRA considers that allocations for housing and employment developments in the emerging local plan may result in a cumulative reduction in air quality in combination with the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan. However, based on the findings of this screening report the potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the policies and allocations of the emerging Darlington Local Plan are considered unlikely.

5.3 Middlesborough Local Plan

5.3.1 Middlesborough's HRA identified two policies where a LSE upon the European sites could not be ruled out related to two impact pathways: recreational impacts from an increase in visitors to the North York Moors SPA/SAC site, and a direct loss of potential pSPA habitat related specifically to proposals for a new Tees Crossing. These impact pathways were considered at the Appropriate Assessment stage and found to not give rise to any adverse effects upon the integrity of any European sites. The Middlesborough HRA does not consider in combination effects with the Darlington

Local Plan. It is considered that no policies of the Middlesborough Publication Local Plan will give rise to in-combination effects with the emerging Darlington Borough Local Plan.

5.4 County Durham Plan

5.4.1 The HRA for the emerging County Durham Plan identified two policies that required Appropriate Assessment related to the impact pathways of recreational pressure on coastal Natura 2000 sites and disturbance to upland SPA species as a result of minerals working. Based on the findings of this screening report due to the distance of allocation sites proposed in the Darlington plan from Natura 2000 sites, the likelihood of significant effects due to increased recreational pressures is considered minimal. The County Durham HRA does not consider in combination effects with the Darlington Local Plan. The County Durham HRA concluded that the plan would not give rise to any adverse effects upon the integrity of any European sites. It is considered that no policies of the County Durham Local Plan will give rise to in-combination effects with the emerging Darlington Borough Local Plan.

5.5 Other Neighbouring and Sub-Regional Development Plans

5.5.1 The most recent HRA for the Local Plans of Hambleton, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland and Richmondshire Council's do not consider in combination effects with the Darlington Local Plan. The HRA published by these authorities concluded that the plans would not give rise to any adverse effects upon the integrity of any European sites. It is considered that no policies of these Local Plans will give rise to in-combination effects with the emerging Darlington Borough Local Plan.

5.6 Other Plans and Strategies

5.6.1 A number of plans and strategies of both Darlington Council, The Tees Valley Combined Authority and other relevant organisations have been reviewed to consider any potential in-combination effects with the Local Plan on Natura 2000 sites. Provided below is a summary of those considered most likely to have in-combination effects with the emerging Local Plan.

5.6.2 The Joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Policies and Sites Development Plan Documents (DPD) set out policies and site allocations for minerals and waste developments in the sub-region. The DPDs cover the boundaries of the five Tees Valley authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees. The HRA work undertaken in relation to these documents identified two policies in the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (MWC2 and MWC8) with the potential to have an adverse impact on Natura 2000 sites. These policies were therefore subject to appropriate assessment.

5.6.3 Of particular relevance is Core Strategy Policy MWC8 which covers the spatial distribution of potential waste sites within the Tees Valley and identifies a general area

of search for the location of larger waste management facilities close to parts of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site. The HRA for these DPDs identifies that the policy has the potential to affect the site through disturbance of bird species from vehicle movements and operational activity, increased emissions and loss of land connected to the site. However, the HRA concludes that there are sufficient safeguards in the Core Strategy and Habitat Regulations to protect the overall integrity of the Teesmoth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site.

5.6.4 Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan outlines the long term investment programme of transport projects intended to make major improvements to the strategic connectivity across the North of England. Darlington and the Tees Valley feature heavily in three of the seven Strategic Development Corridors identified in the plan: Connecting the Energy Coasts; East Coast – Scotland; and, Yorkshire – Scotland. Proposals within these corridors cover a range of road, rail and multimodal projects, including improvements to Darlington Station, the A1(M) and A66.

5.6.5 The HRA for the Strategic Transport Plan concludes that there are no likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the qualifying features of European sites from any of the objectives or policies in the Strategic Transport Plan. The HRA states that any potential direct or indirect impacts on European sites that may arise from new or upgraded transport interventions will be appropriately assessed, mitigated, and/or compensated for, in line with existing best practice and relevant legislation over the lifetime of the Plan, with the need for HRA highlighted and undertaken at the design and development management stage for interventions.

5.6.6 Darlington Borough Council's Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out a 15 year transport strategy to 2026. The LTP supports the delivery of Darlington's Community Strategy - One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and the Local Development Plan, in particular the notion of developing sites that are sustainable and accessible by all modes of transport. LTP3 highlights three challenges facing transport in the Tees Valley:

- Improve the journey experience of transport users of urban, regional and local networks, including interfaces with national & international networks;
- Deliver quantified reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within cities and regional networks, taking account of cross-network policy measures; and
- Improve the connectivity and access to labour markets of key business centres.

5.6.7 In relation to emissions, LTP3 identifies that emissions from road transport in the North East are comparatively small (18% of total based on 2005 data) compared to those from other sectors such as industry and domestic emissions, but is in no way insignificant. The private car is responsible for the majority of carbon emissions from land based travel, and trends suggest that transport is the one sector where carbon emissions continue to rise. Through programmes such as Lets Go Tees Valley and Connect Tees Valley the Tees Valley authorities have demonstrated their commitment to deliver significant travel behaviour change in support of the investment in new and

improved infrastructure. The LTP seeks to deliver reductions in emissions through a number of cross-cutting measures.

5.6.8 The HRA Screening Report for the LTP3 concluded that there will be no likely significant effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from the adoption of plan, and therefore no further appropriate assessment was require.

6. Assessment of Likely Significance

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 As part of the screening process described in the EU Guidance for Appropriate Assessment (Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC) it is a requirement to complete the assessment forms in Annex 2 of the guidance. The assessment forms to be completed include a screening matrix and a 'finding of no significant effects' report matrix.

6.1.2 This section of the report addresses the questions set out in the assessment forms. The evidence that informs the answers given to the assessment form responses is contained in previous sections of this report, plus supporting information in Tables 2 to 6.

6.2 Assessment Tables

6.2.1 In Tables 7 to 11, the potential impacts of the Draft Local Plan, as identified previously in this report, are assessed in terms of how these could affect the highlighted Natura 2000 sites.

Table 7: Potential Impacts on Air Quality of the Draft Local Plan

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
H 1, H 2, H 10, H 11, E 2, E 3, IN 1	Air Quality	Thrislington SAC Durham Coast SAC Castle Eden Dene SAC Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Hartlepool	Increased car/HGV trips from increased population/ dwellings.	Increased air pollution related emissions could cause damage to Natura 2000 vegetation and species.	No	None	As there are no Natura 2000 sites within Darlington borough, if Natura 2000 sites are to be affected by increased traffic generation it will occur as a result of traffic traveling to and from the borough from locations outside Darlington. Figure 3 shows that the main routes that pass between main centres of population/ business and Darlington do not pass within 200m of a Natura 2000 sites. Consequently this factor can be screened out.

Table 8: Potential Impacts on Water Quality of the Draft Local Plan

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
H 1, H 2, H 10, H 11, E2	Water Quality	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Tees Bay (pathways include Billingham Beck, Lustrum Beck and the River Tees)	Increased surface run off from new development carrying additional water borne pollution to the River Tees.	Water borne pollution from River Tees due to new development.	Would act in combination with the housing allocations.	This impact will be reduced by the application of Local Plan policies DC 1, DC 2, DC 3, DC 4, ENV 4 and IN 2 which will be applied to all new developments. In addition green corridors are designated along nearly all watercourses in the urban area, which should give the Local Plan a net positive impact on the water quality of watercourses leading to Teesmouth.	As this impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan, this factor can be screened out.
			Increased sewage output leading to water borne pollution from River Tees.	Due to new housing development.	No	The December 2012 Tees Valley Water Cycle Study identified that Stressholme water treatment works now has more than enough capacity to treat the volume of housebuilding expected in and on the edge of Darlington urban area. Housing allocations are not proposed elsewhere in the	As this impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan, this factor can be screened out.

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
						borough. Local Plan policies DC 4, DC 2 and ENV 7 will make sure that development does not occur that would pollute watercourses through increased sewage output.	

Table 9: Potential Impacts on Hydrology of the Draft Local Plan

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
H 1, H 2, H 10, H 11, E 2	Hydrology	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Tees Bay	Increased surface run off from new development.	Land use change can influence the quantity of surface water run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence the hydrology of the Natura 2000 site.	No	This impact will be reduced by application of Local Plan policies DC 1, DC 2, DC 3, DC 4, ENV 4 and IN 2. which will be applied to all new developments. In addition green corridors are designated along nearly all watercourses in the urban area, which should give the Local Plan a net positive impact on runoff rates into watercourses leading to Teesmouth.	As this impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan, this factor can be screened out.

Table 10: Potential Impacts of Habitat and Species Disturbance of the Draft Local Plan

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
H 1, H 2, H 10, H 11, E 2, IN 1, IN 9	Habitat or Species Disturbance	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/ Ramsar Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/ Ramsar Tees Bay Hartlepool	Construction and operation of new developments.	Potential to affect or destroy the habitat of birds that are among of the target species for Natura 2000 sites, where they inhabit farmland. There are records of lapwing on agricultural land around Darlington's urban edge.	No	The borough contains a county level flight path connecting to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, the Tees Corridor, which is proposed for enhanced green infrastructure but no development allocations. Policies in the Local Plan will continue to restrict development in the countryside, outside of plan allocations. Planning applications will be required to assess the impact of development on biodiversity in line with Policy ENV 8 and to deliver a net gain in biodiversity in line with the NPPF and policy ENV 7.	No significant impact expected, but any potential impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan, this factor can be screened out.
			Increased visitor numbers at Natura 2000 sites.	Could disturb wildlife However the whole borough is more than 8km from any Natura 2000 site- the boundary within	No	Allocations for strategic green corridors, and a requirement for developer contributions to green infrastructure (including prioritising	No significant impact expected, but any potential impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan. Therefore this

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
				which Durham County Council consider most residents are willing to travel to the coast on a regular basis. The great majority of the borough, including Darlington urban area, with the proposed urban extensions, is more than twice that distance from the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA. No significant impact therefore expected.		wildlife friendly greenspace) from new housing development will limit demand for visits to Natura 2000 sites from the inhabitants of new development.	factor can be screened out.

Table 11: Potential Impacts on Climate Change of the Draft Local Plan

Draft Local Plan Policies	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Likely Effect	Conclusion
H 1, H 2, H 10, H 11, E 2, E 3, IN 1	Climate Change	Thrislington SAC Durham Coast SAC Castle Eden Dene SAC Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar Hartlepool	Increased travelling to and around the borough.	Increased greenhouse gas emissions could contribute to climate change and cause damage to Natura 2000 vegetation and species.	No	Developments will be prioritised in sustainable locations to reduce the need to travel. This impact will be reduced by application of Local Plan policies DC 1, DC 4, ENV 4, IN 2, IN 3 and IN 9 which will be applied to all new developments.	As this impact will be effectively managed by policies in the Local Plan, this factor can be screened out.

7. Screening Matrix

7.1 Possible Impacts

7.1.1 Tables 12 and 13 describe the possible impacts resulting from any policies or proposals in the emerging Darlington Local Plan on the Natura 2000 sites. The assessment in Table 12 has been used to complete the Screening Matrix.

Table 12: Screening Matrix

Brief Description of the Plan or Project
The Local Plan will be a framework for how the Darlington borough will develop over the next 20 years to 2036. It will set out where new development requirements should go and include planning policies to guide the location, type and form of development proposals across the borough in order to protect valued environments and heritage, stimulate economic growth, and create sustainable, liveable places. It includes a vision and objectives for the borough and sets out how these will be achieved.
Brief Description of Natura Sites
The following sites have been included in the Screening Matrix for the Draft Local Plan: • Castle Eden Dene SAC, Easington • Thrislington SAC, Sedgefield • Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar, Hartlepool • Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland • Durham Coast SAC, Easington
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on a Natura 2000 site
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: **• reduction of habitat area:** **• disturbance to key species;** **• habitat or species fragmentation;** **• reduction in species density;** **• changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);** **• climate change**
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of: **• interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;** **• interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.**
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms: **• loss;** **• fragmentation;** **• disruption;** **• disturbance;** **• change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.).**
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known
The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

8. Findings of No Significant Effects Report Matrix

8.1 Report Matrix

8.1.1 For all themes and policies in the Draft Local Plan no significant effects have been identified. As such, a matrix that reports the finding of no significant effects (Table 13) has been completed.

Table 13 No Significant Effects Report Matrix

Criteria	Assessment
Name of project or plan	Darlington Borough Council Draft Local Plan
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites	Castle Eden Dene SAC, Durham Thrislington SAC, Durham Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar, Hartlepool Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Durham Coast SAC, Durham
Description of the project or plan	The document will include site allocations for different types of development to meet the boroughs needs up to 2036 identified by the evidence base underpinning the plan, and planning policies to guide the location and form of development in the borough in line with the vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the plan.
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	No

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 This report finds no significant detrimental effects of the Draft Local Plan. The Draft Local Plan is not likely to give rise to any negative impacts on any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the adoption of the document in the borough of Darlington. Appropriate Assessment of this report can therefore be screened out.

9.2 Although there are no significant detrimental effects resulting from the Draft Local Plan on Natura 2000 sites, potential impacts should be investigated of subsequent individual planning applications with specific regard to the following:

- Impact of economic growth (and consequential development) on air quality, water quality, hydrology on Natura 2000 sites.
- Impact of housing development on air quality, water quality and hydrology on Natura 2000 sites
- Impact on traffic growth on air quality, water quality and hydrology on Natura 2000 sites

9.3 Potential impacts of significant planning applications will be considered by assessing the evidence submitted with each application. Accompanying documents including environmental assessments, reports and statements that are required as part of a planning application will form the basis of the assessment.

9.4 Any potential cumulative effects resulting from smaller developments will be identified through continual monitoring. Annual monitoring of individual smaller planning permissions granted that have a negative impact will provide the trigger for seeking further information from developers on application.

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