

Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2026

DRAFT

LAYOUT, IMAGES, MAP SIZES TO BE AGREED WITH DESIGN AND PRINT

How To Get Involved

This draft Green Infrastructure Strategy is available to view at the Town Hall Reception and at Crown Street, Cockerton and the mobile libraries during normal office and opening hours. The documents can also be viewed or downloaded from the Council's website, at www.darlington.gov.uk. You can make comments on any part of this draft Green Infrastructure Strategy on the form provided.

Paper and/or CD copies of the document are available on request by telephoning 01325 388???

Completed forms should be sent:

By post: Head of Place: Strategy and Commissioning
 Darlington Borough Council
 FREEPOST nea2890
 Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

By email: ??

All written comments received will be acknowledged.

All responses must be received by the Council **no later than ?**.

If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact the ?? on 01325 388??? or e-mail using the above address.

Community engagement events

A number of community engagement events have been arranged to allow the community and other interested parties to find out more about the how the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy will work, and to provide people with the opportunity to talk to Council's Officers. These will be advertised in the local press and will be listed at www.darlington.gov.uk

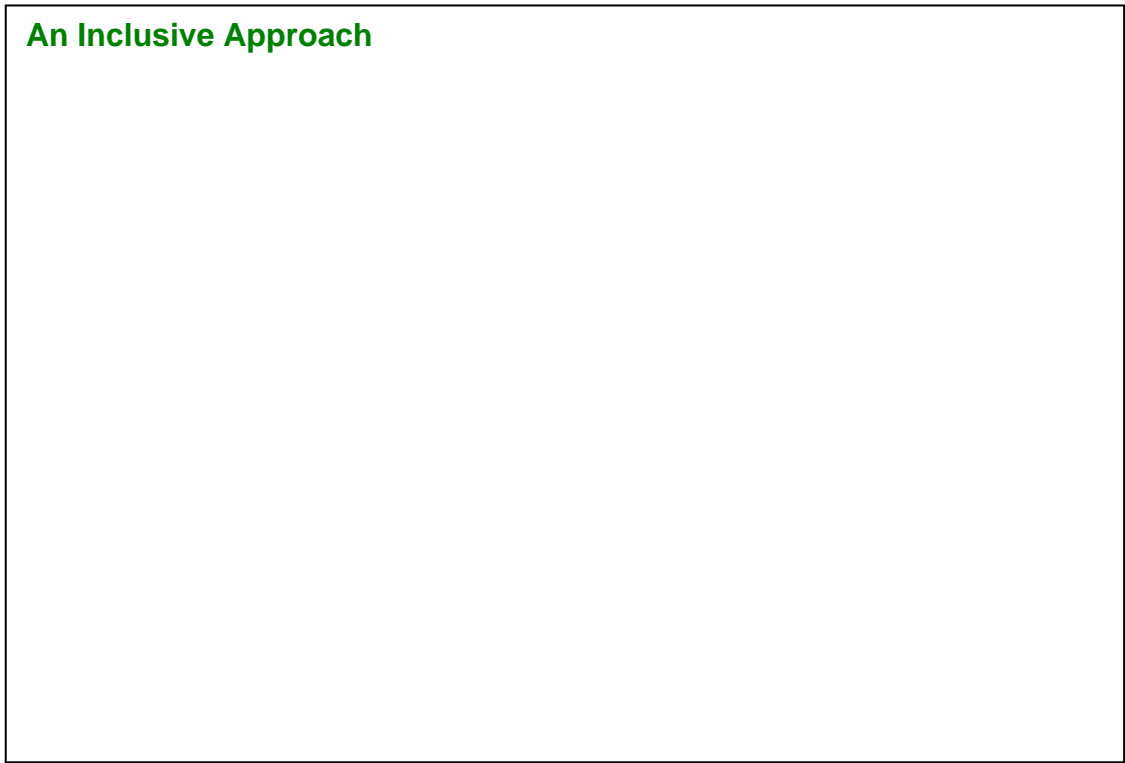
What happens next?

After the consultation period closes, all the comments received will be considered and where appropriate, the draft Strategy will be revised to take them into account.

A summary of all the comments received will be available to inspect at the Town Hall and on the Council's website www.darlington.gov.uk shortly after the end of the consultation period.

The Council expects to adopt the finalised Green Infrastructure Strategy in Autumn 2012.

Foreword



1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is Green Infrastructure?

Why Do We Need a Green Infrastructure Strategy?

Policy Context

2.0 DARLINGTON'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

Objectives

3.0 DARLINGTON'S EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Helping to Mitigate The Impact of Climate Change

Integrating Sustainable Movement

Promoting a Distinctive Townscape and Landscape

Maintaining and Enhancing Biodiversity, Air and Water Quality

Providing Opportunities for Sport and Recreation

Generating Productive Landscapes

Enhancing Community Ownership and Stakeholder Involvement

Promoting Cultural Heritage

Creating a Quality Environment for Investment and Development

4.0 DELIVERING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Working in Partnership

Darlington Green Infrastructure Action Plan

5.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: References

COMMONLY USED DEFINITIONS

Accessible greenspace: space for the public to use free of charge and without time restrictions; some spaces may be closed overnight.

Agri-environment scheme: provides funding to farmers and land managers to deliver environmental management of farmland, includes Entry Level, Organic Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship Schemes.

Ancient woodland: woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before.

Biodiversity: variety of life including different plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

Biomass: material from living or recently living organisms including trees and plants to be used directly or as biofuels to deliver renewable energy

Buffer zone: area situated around the edge of a wildlife site or corridor or as a connecting zone which links areas, increasing their biodiversity value

Carbon footprint: total amount of carbon dioxide emissions produced by a person, group, organisation town or country.

Climate change: effect of global warming on weather conditions and unpredictable variations in temperatures.

Community woodland: woodland that is provided for community use

Conservation Area: area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance

Ecosystem: relationships between living things, water, soil and people

Ecosystem services: are the benefits healthy natural ecosystems provide directly or indirectly including food, fresh water, clean air, climate regulation or pollination of crops;

Flood plain: flat-lying areas adjacent to a watercourse, where water flows in times of flood or would flow but for the presence of flood defences.

Green corridor: linear green space connecting different types of greenspace, can incorporate walking and cycling routes. Most are also wildlife corridors;

Green infrastructure: strategically planned and delivered interconnecting, visually linked network of public and private multifunctional green spaces, landscapes and natural environments in the urban and rural area used for recreation, biodiversity and food production, which supports natural, cultural and ecological processes, with benefits for people, wildlife and place;

Green infrastructure levy: sum paid by homeowners to be used to maintain greenspace in a new development;

Green wedge: open area between neighbourhoods which helps to maintain their separate distinctive qualities;

Honeypot: a popular greenspace that attracts visitors in large numbers

Landscape: consistent, distinct pattern of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and settlements;

Listed building: property or structure, protected by the Government because it has special architectural or historic interest

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): designated by the Council and Natural England for its special local wildlife or geological value and which provide people with opportunities to learn about nature or enjoy it

Local Wildlife Site: designated by the Council for its wildlife importance.

Multifunctionality: the ability of a space to perform more than one greenspace function at the same time.

Priority habitats and species: habitats and species of principal importance identified in the UK and Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plans

Protected habitats or species: protected by national legislation because of their vulnerable status

Public art: permanent or temporary works of art visible to the public either as part of a greenspace, a building or as freestanding artwork

Public Right of Way: includes public footpaths (walking), bridleways (walking, horse riding and cycling) and byways (walking, horse riding and cycling and vehicles) where the public have the right to go.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: protected by English Heritage as being of special historic interest

Renewable energy: energy that occurs naturally and repeatedly in the environment from wind, water, sun and biomass.

Scheduled Monument: nationally important monuments protected against inappropriate development.

Site of Special Scientific Areas Interest (SSSI): protected by the Government it is of national importance for wildlife, geology or geomorphology.

Surface water run off: excess rainwater of from drains that flow over land.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): reduce and slow the quantity and rate of surface water run off from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible.

Wildlife corridor: linear greenspace that providing links for wildlife dispersal and movement, but may also offer wider amenity benefits

Wildlife friendly greenspace: space where naturalness dominates.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 The Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a strategic, coordinated framework for the future development and management of the Borough's green infrastructure to 2026. It discusses the many different functions green infrastructure has and the benefits it can bring to people, wildlife and place. It shows how we can improve our natural environment and maximise the contribution green infrastructure can make to address some of the issues we face, like helping to adapt to climate change, improving the health and well being of residents and promoting the development and regeneration of Darlington.
- 1.0.2 Consequently many different organisations, community groups and the Council have an interest in green infrastructure. The successful delivery of this Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan requires a strategic approach, so that all interests are addressed in a coordinated way, maximising the skills and resources available from a variety of sources.

What is Green Infrastructure?

- 1.0.3 Darlington's existing green infrastructure network provides an interconnecting system of public and private multifunctional green spaces, landscapes and natural environments in the urban and rural area (see overview **Map 1**). It is used for recreation, biodiversity and food production, and also supports natural, cultural and ecological processes so delivering multiple benefits for people, wildlife and place. While not continuous, all spaces and features are visually linked and include:
- Sub regional strategic green corridors: River Tees, River Skerne, River Skerne-West Park, Darlington-Middleton St George-A66/A67-Stockton;
 - green wedges: Cocker Beck, Blackwell/Skerne Park, Haughton/Red Hall;
 - locally important open spaces: parks, cemeteries, wildlife friendly green space, green corridors, informal open space, landscape amenity space, children's play areas, civic spaces;
 - playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities;
 - ornamental parklands;
 - trees, urban and rural woodlands and community woodland;
 - allotments and community gardens;
 - private gardens
 - urban fringe;
 - agricultural land;
 - the public rights of way network; and
 - open countryside.
- 1.0.4 Each space or feature can have one or many functions. Some may be more obvious than others but all are equally important e.g. South Park provides for sport, recreation, play and wildlife but it is also a valuable flood storage area helping to mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 1.0.5 Each space or feature also provides many direct and indirect benefits to people, wildlife and place e.g. a green corridor makes it easier for people and wildlife to move around the Borough, promotes

healthy lifestyles and encourages cycling and walking helping to reduce Darlington's carbon footprint.






Why Do We Need a Green Infrastructure Strategy?



- 1.0.6 While Darlington's green infrastructure is well used for recreation, biodiversity and food production, more can be made of the extensive space available. Building on Darlington's unique selling point as a high quality green environment to live and work in, we can begin to use green infrastructure successfully to address some of the wider environmental, social, health and economic issues Darlington's community faces; improving the health and well being of residents, encouraging sustainable travel, improving the productivity and value of the countryside and promoting the regeneration of Darlington's neighbourhoods can all be partly addressed through gradually improving green infrastructure.
- 1.0.7 Consequently many different organisations, community groups and the Council can influence and have an interest in green infrastructure. It is important that a more strategic approach to green infrastructure management and development is taken through this Strategy, so that these issues are addressed in a coordinated way to make best use of the space available, and add value, connectivity and multifunctionality so that green infrastructure is capable of delivering a wider range of functions and quality of life benefits.
- 1.0.8 In summary this Green Infrastructure Strategy will:
- Provide a clear vision and objectives for the future management and development of a quality, integrated and multifunctional green infrastructure network to 2026;
 - Make sure that green infrastructure is planned and managed in ways which support the delivery of other plans and strategies including the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, the Darlington Core Strategy, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Open Space Strategy;
 - Influence other plans and strategies, particularly the emerging planning policy document, the Making Places and Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document, so that green infrastructure remains central to the sustainable development of the Borough;
 - Identify the many functions and benefits green infrastructure has in Darlington for people, place and wildlife;
 - Provide a framework for the separate living Green Infrastructure Action Plan; specific projects and their future management, maintenance and development arrangements will be identified in that document;
 - Provide a degree of certainty for partners and stakeholders, particularly those who will be involved in delivering new green infrastructure in the Borough to 2026.



INSERT MAP 1: EXISTING GI NETWORK







Existing Green Infrastructure Network

-  Formal Parks
-  Designated Wildlife Areas
-  Semi-Natural Greenspace
-  Strategic Allotments
-  Strategic Sports Facilities

-  Strategic Corridor Buffer 150 m
-  Local Corridor Buffer 50 m

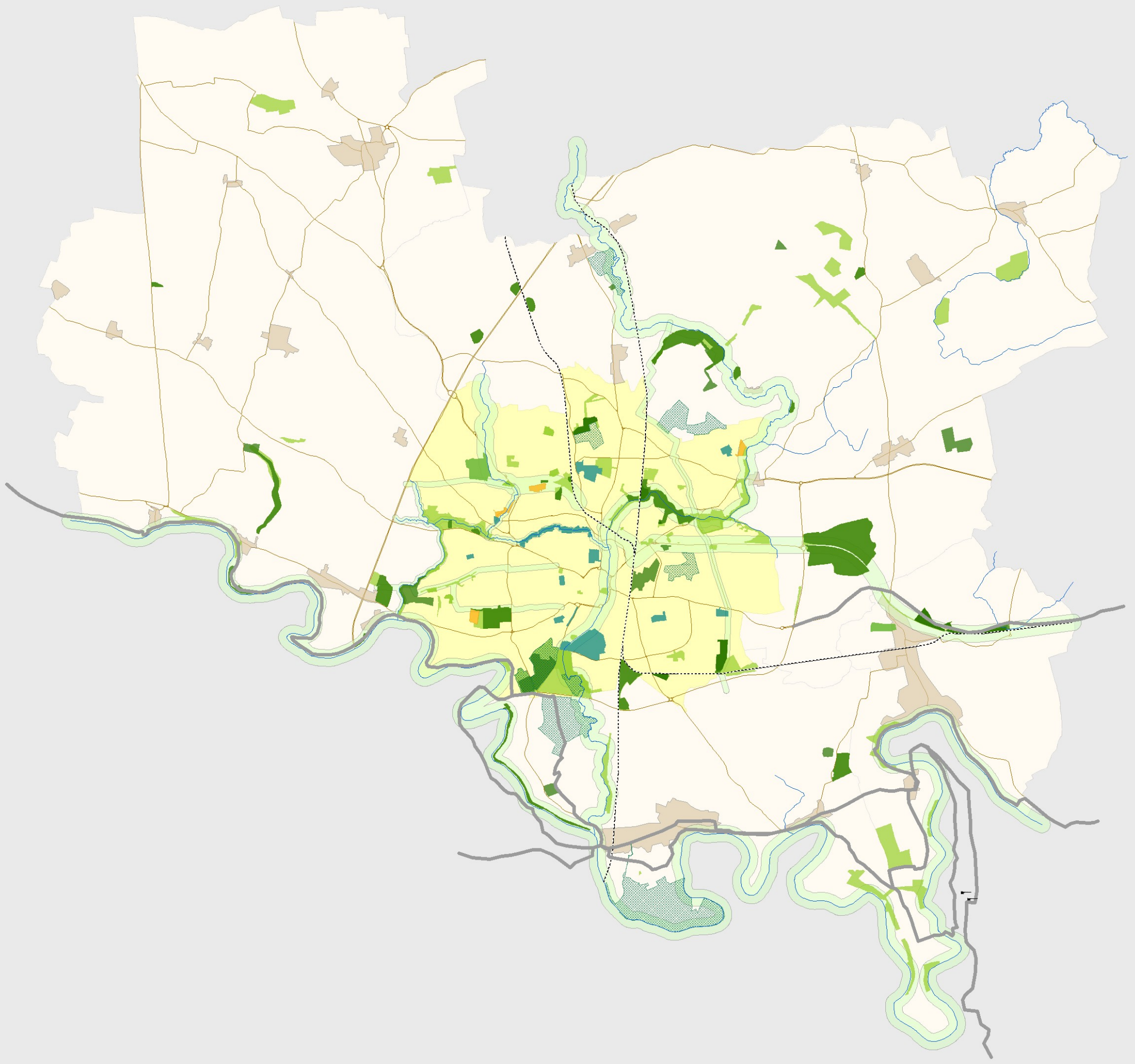
-  Urban Area
-  Villages

-  Rivers
-  Primary Road Routes
-  Railways
-  Strategic Cycle/Walking Routes



Plan produced by the Regulatory Service Division
Services for Place Department
Scale 1:70 000 @ A3
Date: June 2012

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number 100023728.



1.1 POLICY CONTEXT

1.1.1 Green infrastructure now has a prominent place in the policy process; this draft Green Infrastructure Strategy has been prepared in the context of up to date European and national legislation and reflects the key themes and priorities of national, regional, sub regional and local policy guidance. Importantly, this Strategy complements the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, and helps deliver the vision and objectives of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, and the Darlington Core Strategy. **APPENDIX 1** has a full reference list, key documents are listed below:

National Guidance:

- **Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature:** recognises that an interconnected natural system has many benefits and functions to promote 'sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing'. An integrated landscape-scale approach to delivery is encouraged, using local partnerships where possible.
- **Making Space for Nature:** states that the UK's biodiversity network is fragmented and in decline. It aims to re-establish the diversity, function and resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems in a self sustaining network. It emphasises the value functioning ecosystems and their services can bring to the environment and wellbeing.
- **Green Infrastructure Guidance:** promotes the delivery of a network of 'more, bigger, better and joined up' wildlife sites to create effective green infrastructure that can contribute to the recovery of biodiversity and help people value and conserve their local green environment. Quality green infrastructure in and around the urban area is seen as creating quality places where people want to live and work.
- **National Planning Policy Framework:** aims to protect and enhance valued landscapes and soils from new development while making sure that the impacts on biodiversity are minimised, where possible providing net gains. It seeks to establish coherent, ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures while recognising the 'wider benefits' ecosystems services can have.

Sub Regional Guidance

- **Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy:** provides the basis for this Strategy, highlights the importance of having a planned, integrated network of multifunctional greenspaces so that by 2021 the Tees Valley green infrastructure network will:
 - Enhance the quality of place for existing and future communities and potential investors;
 - Provide an enhanced environment for new development, regeneration and housing market renewal and produces high quality design and developments;
 - Create and extend opportunities for access, regeneration, and enhancement of biodiversity; and
 - Provide a buffer against the effects of climate change.

A landscape approach to delivery is promoted using four strategic corridors in Darlington; the River Tees, River Skerne, River Skerne-Faverdale and the Darlington-Middleton St George-Stockton corridors (see Map 1) are the focus for strategic green infrastructure improvements.

- **Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan:** sets out coordinated and targeted programmes of action to help increase the protection and viability of priority species and habitats that are considered to be under threat in the Borough.

Local Guidance

- **One Darlington: Perfectly Placed:** Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy recognises that quality green infrastructure is important to quality of life and provides a more attractive setting for property and business, helping attract people to the Borough or encourage them to stay. It acknowledges that transport, healthy living, education and anti social behaviour can be positively influenced by an integrated and coordinated approach to green infrastructure.
- **Darlington Core Strategy:** green infrastructure is a key, cross cutting theme; policies will help to deliver the spatial themes and actions of this Strategy. It sets out how the Borough will develop over the next 15 years. Seven strategic development locations are identified; the Town Centre, Town Centre Fringe, Central Park, North Western Urban Fringe, Eastern Urban Fringe, Darlington Urban Area and Durham Tees Valley Airport are where the majority of new development will take place by 2026.
- **Darlington Open Space Strategy:** sets out the quantity, quality and accessibility standards for publicly accessible recreational and amenity space in the urban area and the villages. It helps identify where gaps in provision exist at a ward, area and Borough wide level.
- **Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan:** aims to create a rights of way network that gives the public sustainable access to quality countryside where they can experience biodiversity and recreation safely.

Where Can I Find Out More?

The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, DEFRA, 2010 www.defra.gov.uk

Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, DEFRA, 2010 www.defra.gov.uk

Green Infrastructure Guidance, Natural England, 2009 www.naturalengland.org.uk

National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, 2012 www.dclg.gov.uk

Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, 2008 www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan, Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership, 2011 www.teesvalleybiodiversity.org

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Core Strategy, DBC, 2011 www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

Darlington Open Space Strategy, DBC, 2007 www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

2.0 DARLINGTON'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

By 2026 Darlington will have a high quality, multifunctional, accessible green infrastructure network which enhances the community's quality of life and the natural environment for wildlife. An improved rights of way network will make it possible to move safely, easily and comfortably through the Borough on foot or by bike, so that those who live in, work in or visit Darlington have abundant opportunities to explore its distinctive, mature and valued green neighbourhoods with tree lined streets, historical parks or village greens surrounded by attractive, wildlife rich countryside. Sitting within the town, urban fringe and countryside outstanding outdoor sport facilities, tourism attractions, unique heritage and biodiversity features will help people enjoy the high quality of life Darlington is famous for.

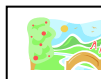
The rural character of the countryside will be protected and the open landscape aspect to the south of the town will be maintained, providing wide, open views to the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. Traditional farming will sit comfortably within a more wildlife friendly and accessible landscape alongside sustainable, small scale rural attractions and renewable energy initiatives, providing those who work and live there with opportunities to make increasingly diverse use of their land.

The capacity of green infrastructure to accommodate more protected and priority habitats and species will be enhanced encouraging Darlington's valuable healthy ecosystems to flourish, so that wildlife and plants can move, feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce more easily, making them more resilient to climate change. The special green, treed environment in the built area and the urban fringe will mature and expand providing unique environments where opportunities for recreation, biodiversity, food and fuel production can sit side by side. Making the best use of existing and new greenspaces will provide greater opportunities for play, sport, recreation, relaxation and local food production, promoting active healthy lifestyles close to home. The growing appreciation for the natural environment will be actively captured so people of all ages can value, manage and care for it.

A quality, distinctive and well connected green infrastructure network will help attract new investment, encouraging people to live and work in Darlington because of its exceptional ability to deliver healthy, safe and sustainable lifestyles. New green neighbourhoods will improve the quantity and quality of greenspace, habitats and trees for people and wildlife while integrating sustainable drainage and flood storage will help the Borough mitigate the effects of, and help the natural environment adapt to climate change.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

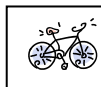
2.1.1 The objectives link the vision to the rest of this Strategy. The projects identified in the accompanying Action Plan should achieve one or more of these objectives, to help deliver the vision. As all objectives are interrelated, delivery of one will help to deliver benefits elsewhere. Where the symbols shown in the left hand column below appear in the Action Plan, this will show where an objective is being met.



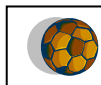
1. Protect a high quality visual landscape and townscape, and enhance the unique character, heritage, function, intrinsic quality and sense of place of Darlington's green infrastructure network to contribute positively to its distinctiveness;



2. Provide a connected network of healthy, wildlife rich, natural ecosystems by protecting, restoring and enhancing the extent of protected and priority habitats and species that exist in green infrastructure, through development and land management, to prevent biodiversity loss and make wildlife more resilient and able to adapt to change;



3. Contribute to initiatives to maintain, expand and enhance an accessible, quality green infrastructure network so that connections are in place to enable the community and wildlife to get around the Borough freely, safely and easily while improving links between urban green spaces, the urban fringe and the countryside;



4. Protect and enhance a wide range of opportunities for safe, accessible formal and informal sport, recreation and leisure facilities to encourage the community and visitors to undertake healthy, multi sensory, invigorating exercise and enjoy mentally stimulating experiences;



5. Create a quality, distinctive, economically useful and productive green infrastructure network to attract sustainable economic growth, support regeneration, local food production, rural diversification and tourism to meet the needs of local businesses, landowners and attract a diverse employment base and visitors to the Borough;



6. Minimise the impact of, and adapt to the effects of climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the use of resources, the risk of flooding and pollution and provide for species adaptation by maximising the protection and creation of green infrastructure;



7. Promote more positive use of features away from the built environment by ensuring that the design, location and mix of green infrastructure across the Borough maintains and creates safe, attractive, accessible and sustainable use and enjoyment by people of all age groups and abilities;



8. Create a softer, diverse, easily accessible urban fringe by promoting more visually pleasing, wildlife friendly features to strengthen its character and landscape quality and attract greater use for informal recreation, education, sport and tourism;



9. Support initiatives to engage more people in the design, management and maintenance of green infrastructure, to encourage a greater understanding of the natural and historic world, natural processes, and the importance of caring for it.

3.0 DARLINGTON'S EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

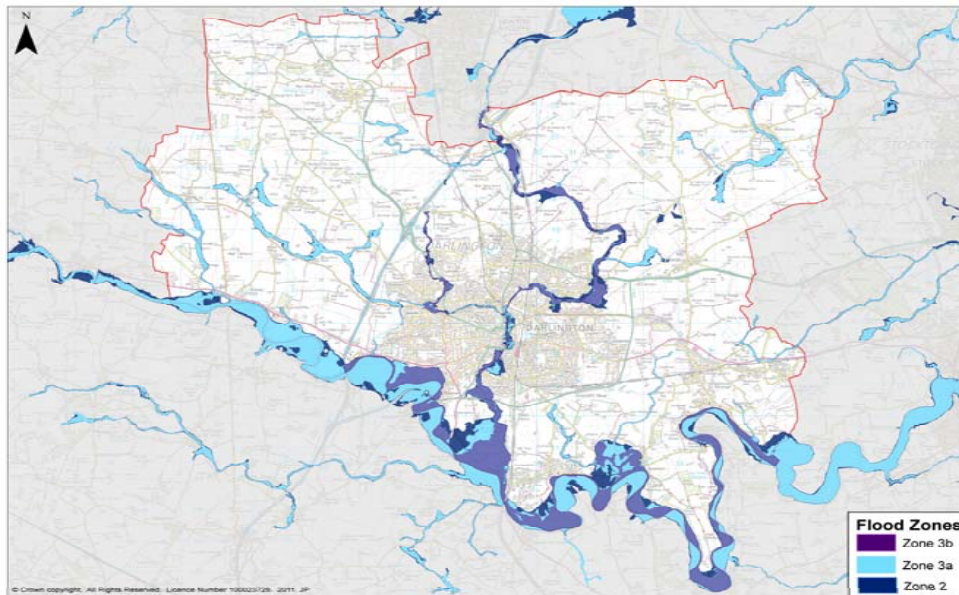
3.0.1 The starting point is to understand the key characteristics and functions of the existing green infrastructure network, its strengths, illustrated by examples of good practice in the Borough as well as opportunities for improvement. This will help us to understand how some of the wider environmental, social, health and economic issues facing Darlington can be addressed by green infrastructure. Full details for text references are found in *Where Can I Find Out More?* at the end of each section.

3.1 HELPING TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

3.1.1 Climate change affects all of us; hotter, drier summers and wetter, milder winters are more common and the number and extent of storms, floods and heat waves are increasing. Burning fossil fuels, like carbon dioxide could see annual temperatures rise by up to 1°C in the 2020s, and by up to 2.5°C in the 2050s¹. In the future, people are likely to experience up to 20% more winter rainfall and 30% less summer rainfall¹. To help reduce the impact of climate change, Darlington must help achieve the national target to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050 and the Tees Valley target of a 20% reduction by 2020¹.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- It helps reduce the flood risk to people and property. Substantial areas of green infrastructure next to rivers and becks create natural flood plains where water flows and can be stored when it floods (Map 2). Sustainable drainage systems like ponds and swales can help reduce the risk from surface water flooding particularly in high risk areas like the Town Centre Fringe (Map 3);
- Trees, street trees and community woodlands help circulate air, provide shade and keep the built environment cool. Without them the urban area could be at least 5°C hotter than the rural area² making life more difficult for young and older people, who are more vulnerable to heat. Trees also help store carbon helping to reduce the impact of climate change;
- A well connected network will prevent species loss, while less mobile species and plants will be able to migrate or inhabit new areas and establish healthy ecosystems in a more suitable climate to survive. Without it climate change is likely to be the 'dominant driver of biodiversity loss by the end of the century'² (see 3.4);
- Building in space in new development particularly in the more densely developed parts of the urban area for green roofs and living walls can reduce the risk of flooding. Use of trees, bird and bat boxes can provide important stepping stones so wildlife be more resilient to climate change (see 3.4);
- Green corridors and strategic greenspaces provide space for people to walk and cycle instead of using the car, helping reduce the amount of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere (see 3.2);
- Growing fruit and vegetables locally in Darlington reduces carbon emissions by limiting the distance food travels to the local market (see 3.6);
- It provides space for renewable energy technologies and local fuel crops helping to increase the amount of clean energy entering the atmosphere (see 3.6).



Map 2: Flood Risk for the Borough, Darlington SFRA, JBA, 2009

- More Information**
- Flood Zone 3b: flood plain where no development is allowed. This space will remain in use as green infrastructure in the future. Most is green corridors or in the rural area, agricultural land;
 - Flood Zone 3a: at a high risk of flooding, development is not usually allowed there. In most cases it will stay as green infrastructure and includes green river corridors and farmland;
 - Only a few parts of town are highly susceptible to surface water flooding. In the Town Centre Fringe, areas close to Cocker Beck and the River Skerne the risk should be reduced; sustainable drainage systems would be encouraged in new development;
 - Some low lying areas are at medium risk of surface water flooding. Green space should be kept to help with drainage or sustainable drainage should be used help reduce flood risk;
 - Flood risk is less severe in Flood Zone 2 and in the low susceptibility surface water zone so are more likely to experience changes to land management in the future.



Map 3: Surface Water Map for the Borough, Darlington SFRA, JBA, 2010

Good Practice: West Park Sustainable Drainage System

Sustainable drainage ponds have been creatively incorporated alongside West Auckland Road as a key part of the wider green infrastructure masterplan for West Park. They successfully manage surface water run off from the extensive new development in two large ponds. The surrounding wetlands and reedbeds provide important priority habitats for a range of priority species; for the first time, the White-letter hairstreak butterfly, the banded demoiselle dragonfly and the kingfisher have been spotted, using these valuable stepping stones to encourage species movement between the built area and the countryside.

Good Practice: Northwood Primary School

Situated in the densely built up North Road ward, next to the River Skerne green corridor, the new Northwood Primary School is an exemplar of sustainable design and good practice. Building in numerous green sustainability features, value and variety has been added to this strategic green wildlife corridor; a sedum roof, a living wall and a wildlife pond provide space for birds, butterflies and dragonflies to live and plants and herbs to grow. Connectivity for wildlife, particularly less mobile species has been transformed through a part of town with limited green features, while carbon emissions and flood risk have also been reduced. Pupils also have plenty of opportunities to learn about the benefits of growing their own food locally in the school garden.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- 'Increased emphasis'³ will be given to protecting and restoring green infrastructure for flood plains next to rivers, particularly next to the River Skerne in the Town Centre Fringe and in the Eastern Urban Fringe, and next to West Beck in the North Western Urban Fringe;
- Creative use of sustainable drainage systems in new development, particularly in the Town Centre Fringe can help reduce flood risk; a 10% increase in green cover can see a 5% reduction in surface water run off⁴ and provide valuable space for protected and priority habitats;
- Creating or extending green corridors will encourage more walking and cycling, reduce carbon emissions from vehicles and help wildlife move around more easily and adapt to climate change;
- Planting more trees, particularly in larger developments like Lingfield Point and Central Park, in greenspaces in the urban area or through changes to land management can help store carbon and keep the urban area cool;
- Changing land use and/or management can help grow biomass to supply local fuel to support renewable energy generation locally. In appropriate locations, it can provide space to accommodate renewable energy development;
- Promoting sustainable, wildlife friendly design and redesign of greenspaces and in larger developments like Central Park and Lingfield Point, next to green corridors, in areas like the Town Centre Fringe will provide more stepping stones for wildlife making them more resilient to climate change.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy, Tees Valley Unlimited, 2010 www.climatenortheast.com

²Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, DEFRA, 2011 www.defra.gov.uk

³Darlington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, JBA Consulting, 2009 [www.darlington.gov.uk/planning policy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/planning-policy)

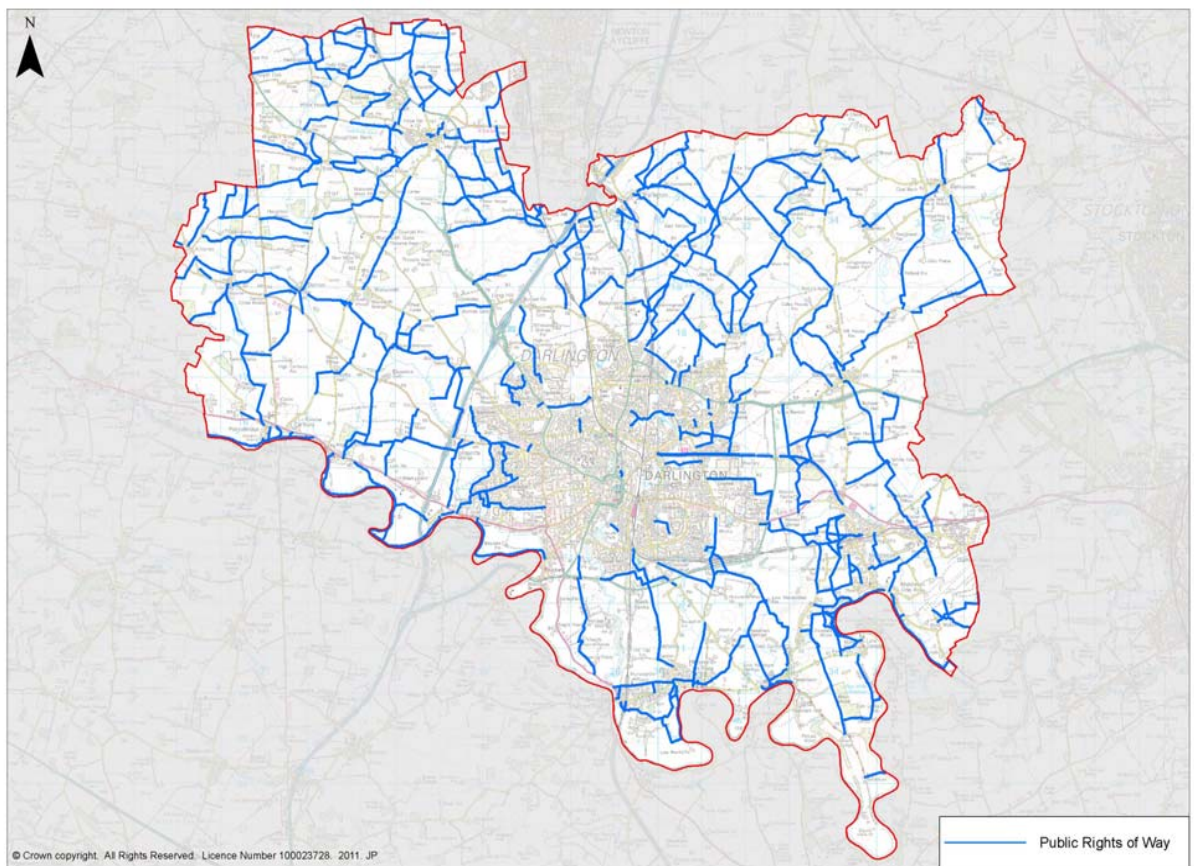
⁴Building natural value for sustainable economic development: The green infrastructure valuation toolkit user guide, Genecon LLP, 2011 www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk

3.2 INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

3.2.1 Darlington's generally flat topography and close proximity of many shops and services, homes and places of work to each other means that almost 50% of all journeys are less than two miles. 41% of car trips could be made by bike along the Borough's strategic and local on-road and green off road leisure cycle routes. For those wanting to travel further afield the Sustrans National Cycle Network route 14 connects Darlington via Middleton St George to Stockton while the Regional Cycle Route 52 connects Croft-on-Tees to Low Dinsdale and beyond. For those who prefer to walk, an extensive 300km of Public Rights of Way cross the Borough (Map 4)¹. 70% are open and available for use including many popular paths close to villages, like High Coniscliffe and Middleton One Row, at honeypots like Broken Scar Recreation Area, in the urban fringe, near Skertingham or along the popular Teesdale Way, a long distance walk next to the River Tees. The urban area also has a comprehensive, well used network of over 60 paths that are increasingly popular linking neighbourhoods with work and leisure¹.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- It provides an attractive, quality environment for cyclists and pedestrians to travel sustainably along attractive green corridors, river corridors or through parks and large green spaces, between home, work, school, shops and services instead of by car; 300 cycle trips a day use the Rockwell Route along the River Skerne² helping to reduce the impact of climate change (see 3.1);
- 'Sustainable access to quality countryside'¹ is more popular than ever along the public rights of way network for walking, cycling, horse riding and other healthy recreation activities;
- Easy, safe access along green corridors and rights of way encourages people to go to the Borough's many parks and greenspaces, Local Nature Reserves and Community Woodlands. Once there, 30km of high quality, well maintained footpaths and cycle paths, give everyone, young and old, families with pushchairs and disabled people the opportunity to enjoy the different experiences offered.
- 'Promoted trails' and 'circular walks' like the Piercebridge Linear walk or the Sockburn Loop actively encourage use of paths in the wider countryside. This can increase use of nearby village services and rural attractions (see 3.6).
- It helps people enjoy being part of a high quality, attractive and diverse semi natural environment as part of their everyday lives, and by so doing, encourages them to look after it (see 3.7).



Map 4: Darlington Public Rights of Way network, Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Bowles Green Limited, 2008

Good Practice: Eastern Transport Corridor: National Cycle Network 14

For many, the A66 can be a barrier to exploring the urban fringe and the wider countryside. An integral part of the new Eastern Transport Corridor was to provide a quality environment where pedestrians and cyclists can enjoy the same safe, easy access through town and to the urban fringe as those with a car. Running along its length, a new off road green corridor (National Cycle Network 14) makes travel for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre and the outlying Red Hall and Lingfield areas easy. For those who wish to travel further afield for home or leisure a pedestrian/cycle bridge takes them safely over the A66. For the first time, many people are enjoying nature and recreation outside the A66; South Burdon Community Woodland and The Whinnies have both seen an increase in positive use.

Good Practice: Skertingham Urban Fringe

Extensive partnership working over several years with landowners and developers has significantly improved the existing public rights of way network in the northern urban fringe. A new entrance gate and hedgerow planting clearly identify the route from Harrowgate Hill into Skertingham Woodland and the wider Ketton countryside making it an easy and popular choice for many. Once there a network of quality rights of way and permissive paths mean that opportunities for exploring are clear and varied; short or long walks along the River Skerne, in Skertingham Wood, to Barmpton village or to Ketton Bridge, one of Darlington's Scheduled Monuments help people feel comfortable exploring the natural environment away from home.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Improving connectivity along and between green corridors and public rights of way particularly along the River Skerne in the Town Centre Fringe, along river corridors, and to the urban fringe will encourage greater use by sustainable travel for people moving around the Borough and beyond;
- Incorporating multifunctional, sustainable transport routes in the design of new development particularly at the strategic development locations will help make sure that walking and cycling can become the preferred choice for those living or working there;
- Improving the quality and surfaces of paths to and through existing green spaces, especially lower quality or isolated green spaces and along green corridors will encourage greater use, particularly by older people, those with children and those with disabilities and improve the multifunctionality of these spaces;
- Improving signage and publicity will encourage more use, particularly of paths in the rural area and to natural and built heritage features, rural attractions and for village services will spread use more evenly across the network to reduce the impact at honeypots.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Bowles Green Limited, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

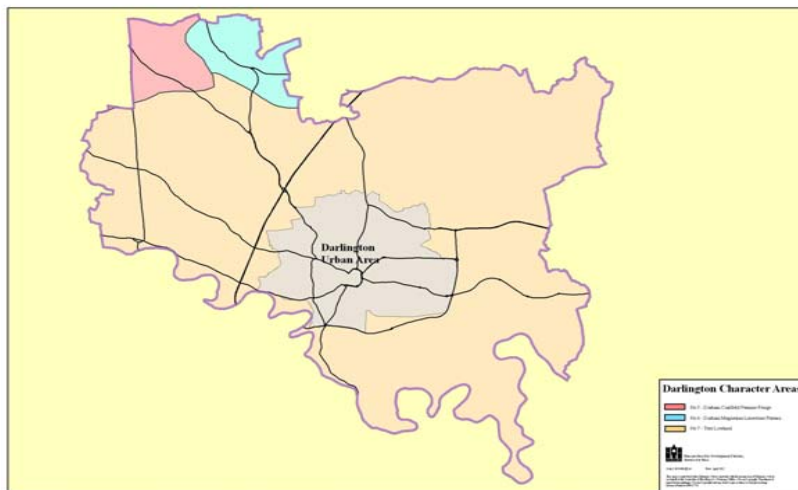
²Darlington Borough Council data

3.3 PROMOTING A DISTINCTIVE TOWNSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE

3.3.1 Darlington's unique landscape and townscape has evolved over millions of years; the underlying geology and soils, together with rivers and man made influences has helped create the distinctive environment that we see today. Whether as a place to view, explore, live in or work in, the Borough's green landscapes and townscapes significantly contribute to the scale, function 'character and sense of place that people value so much'¹. Three national landscape character areas (Map 5) 'reflect the rich and diverse character' of Darlington²; the broad, gently undulating Tees Lowland forms the majority of the Borough with open arable farmland providing wide views to the distant hills of the North York Moors and upland Dales before dropping gently to the River Tees. The north west is formed by the small but 'distinctive'³ gently undulating upland Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau near Heighington sitting alongside the rolling pastoral farming land in the Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe.

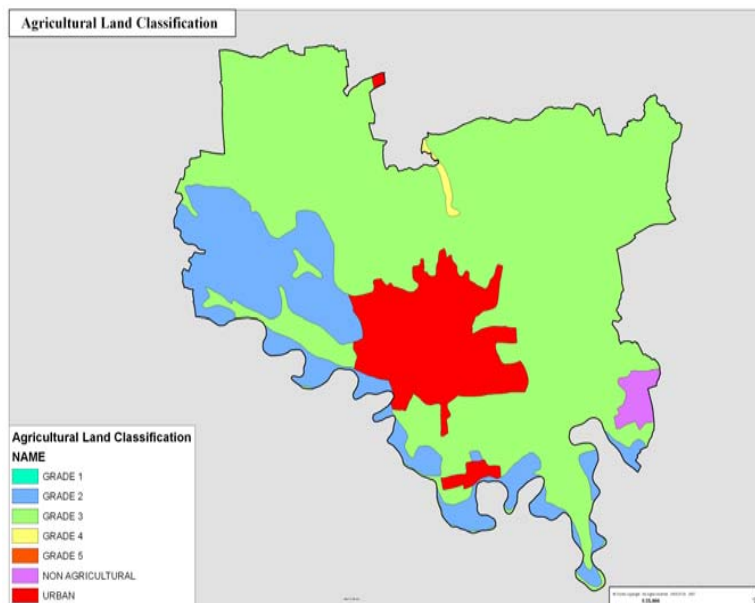
Why is green infrastructure important?

- Underlying geology and soils influence the type of trees, plants, wildlife and ecosystems that live in the landscape, notably in places like the Durham Magnesian Limestone escarpment which supports a rare ecosystem; rare species-rich limestone grassland including Blue Moor grass and Quaking grass and the Dark Red Helleborine Orchid, attracts the Durham Argus butterfly and Cistus Forester Moth, rarely seen elsewhere in the North East (see 3.4);
- Geology and soil affects agricultural land quality influencing where different types of farming are more likely to take place (Map 6). More fertile soils form the higher quality Grade 2 land between the River Tees and Cocker Beck which are more suitable for growing crops, whereas other areas are more suitable for rearing animals (see 3.6);
- Several wide green corridors and open green wedges provide clear separation between urban neighbourhoods and between the urban area and surrounding villages (Map 7). Keeping them is essential to protect their individual characteristics and the Borough's settlement pattern;
- It helps improve the water quality and biodiversity value of the Borough's rivers and becks. North of the Skerne Bridge, the quality and course of the River Skerne has been restored; otters and water voles thrive but are more limited close to the Town Centre where the Skerne flows through a man made channel. The water flow of Cocker Beck is poor; water quality and variety of wildlife reflects this (see 3.4);
- Traditional field patterns, hedgerows and wetlands reinforce the distinctive landscape in different parts of the Borough (see 3.4). Darlington's 'dominant treescape'³ is highly valued, defining parts of the West End, South Park and West Cemetery;
- Darlington's industrial past has left a legacy of derelict land, particularly in the central area or close to railway lines. Left untouched these are highly valuable open mosaic habitats; the Slag Grasslands at The Whinnies provide an ideal habitat for protected butterflies like the Dingy Skipper (see 3.4).

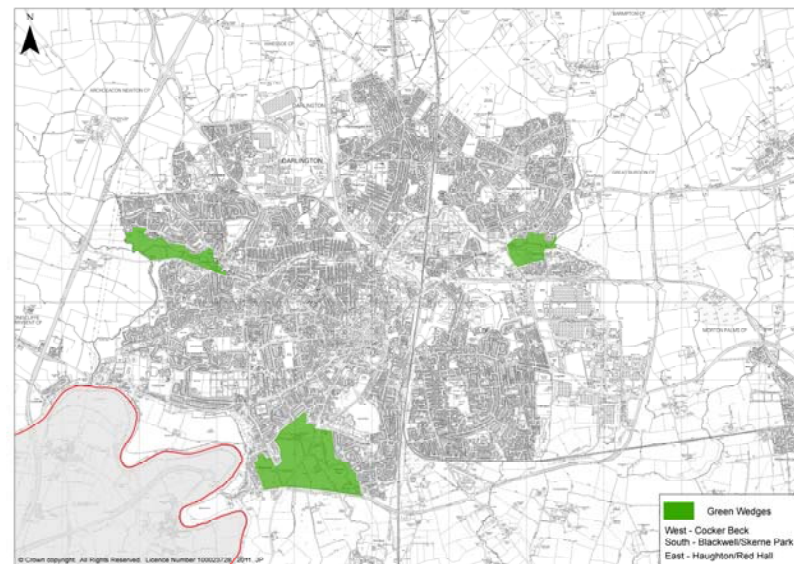


Map 5: Natural Landscape Character Areas

Further Information
 Grade 1: excellent quality agricultural land - should be protected from development
 Grade 2: very good quality agricultural land – development should be resisted where possible
 Grade 3: good to moderate quality agricultural land – appropriate development may be considered
 Grade 4: poor quality agricultural land
 Grade 5: very poor quality agricultural land
 Grade 4 and 5 land would benefit from improvement.



Map 6: Agricultural Land Classification for Darlington



Map 7: Darlington's Green Wedges

Good Practice: Brinkburn Pond Local Nature Reserve

Opportunities were taken to add value to a substantial area of early successional brownfield land that existed on this derelict site, to significantly enhance its landscape quality. Through redevelopment a robust ecological network of woodland, grasslands and wetlands has been created across three linked sites. Now established as Brinkburn Pond Nature Reserve, its landscape quality has been transformed into a highly attractive, biodiverse environment, and is one of Darlington's most important assets for protected species including the Great Crested Newt, Dingy Skipper, the little grebe and a range of songbirds.

Good Practice: River Skerne Restoration project

By the late 1990s the River Skerne north of the Skerne Bridge flowed along an altered course through an uninviting industrial landscape, hidden from view by industrial waste tipping. An innovative EU funded project led to the restoration of 2km of the river; original river meanders were restored, a more natural channel was cut and the old filled, riverbanks were restored to more natural shapes and the floodplain lowered to provide better flood storage, water flow and quality. Habitat quality was transformed through waterside planting on new ledges and shallow wetlands, as a result otter numbers and fish populations have increased significantly. Today the river flows along much of its original path, through a high quality natural green landscape that brings the country into the town.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Restoring a more natural course to the River Skerne in the Town Centre Fringe and also at Cocker Beck will significantly improve landscape and townscape character, water quality, flood mitigation, biodiversity and access;
- Protecting and planting new native hedgerows, hedgerow trees and wetlands particularly in the rural area, urban fringe and along transport routes and green corridors will restore landscape quality;
- The use of wildflower meadows can provide attractive buffers between roads, development and users, providing a natural landscape and townscape;
- Positive management of existing woodland, particularly ancient, semi-natural woodland through protection, thinning, replanting and planting of new native species will provide continuous tree cover in the future, particularly in strategic parks and cemeteries;
- Woodland, wet woodland and associated biodiverse grasslands should be re-established to improve the setting of rivers, their water quality and to improve the extent and variety of wildlife that live there;
- Redevelopment of vacant, disused brownfield land should incorporate the most biodiverse re-colonised areas to restore landscape quality;
- Continued work with landowners and farmers to support agri-environment schemes will help restore wetlands, ponds and scrapes, natural field margins and previously common arable wildflower species like field scabious, Greater Knapweed and the now rare Corn Buttercup into the landscape.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

²Countryside Character: North East, Countryside Commission, 2002

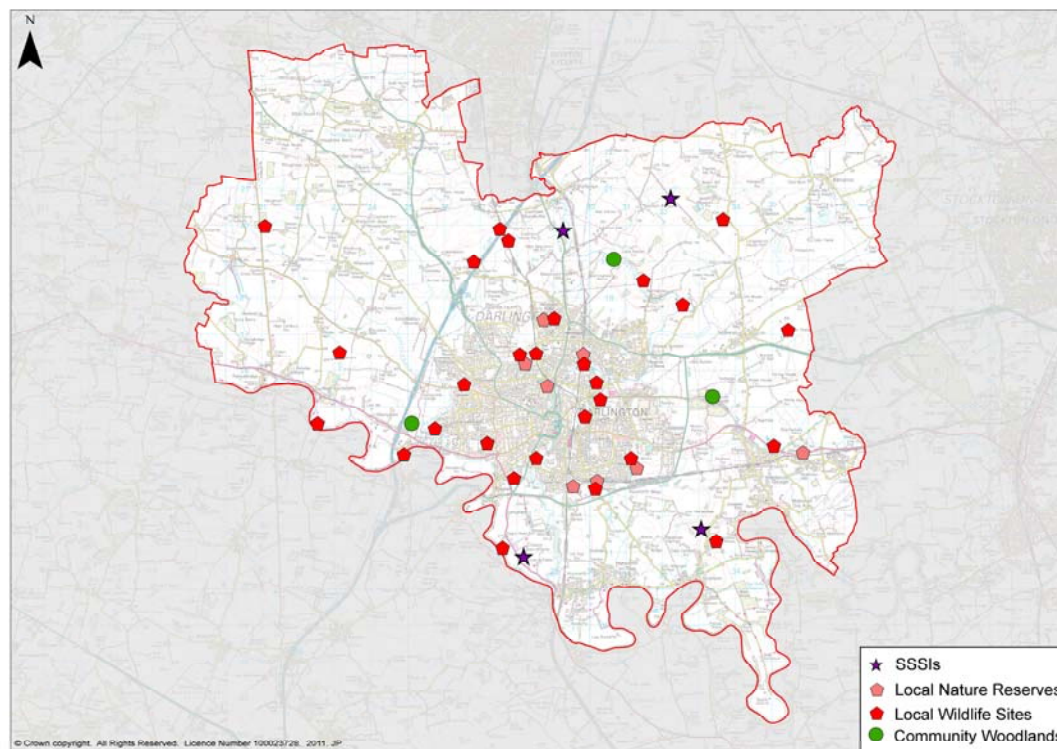
³Darlington Tree and Woodland Strategy, DBC, 2011 www.darlington.gov.uk

3.4 MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY, AIR AND WATER QUALITY

3.4.1 Biodiversity and good air and water quality are 'critically important'¹ to providing the basic life support system that we all depend upon. A well connected ecological network helps wildlife move, feed, disperse, migrate and reproduce while delivering many ecosystem services; improved health and wellbeing, mitigating climate change, crop pollination for food production and local environmental quality all come from biodiversity. But Darlington's biodiversity network is fragmented; four small nationally protected SSSIs at Neasham Fen, Newton Ketton Meadow, Hell Kettles and Redcar Field, support rare plants and species, while seven locally protected Local Nature Reserves at Drinkfield Marsh, Brinkburn Pond, The Whinnies, Geneva Woods, Brankin Moor, Rockwell and Maidendale, three Community Woodlands at South Burdon, Skertingham and Merrybent and 25 Local Wildlife Sites provide for a mix of European, nationally and locally protected and priority habitats and species (see Map 8). Existing green corridors and use of agri-environment schemes help connectivity but without significant improvements it will be difficult for biodiversity levels to remain viable across these isolated spaces in the long term.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- Protected SSSIs, Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and Community Woodlands (Map 8) provide space where protected and Priority Habitats and species, including lowland meadows (5.1ha), reedbeds (2ha) and the Bullfinch can become established;
- It delivers healthy, natural ecosystems so that there is no annual net loss in the size, quality and mix of any protected or priority habitats or species like the Brown Hare and the Skylark as well as pollinators like the declining bumblebee essential to crop pollination, food production (see 3.6) and healthy living;
- 'Connectivity matters'²; green corridors including railway lines, rivers, roads and between wildlife friendly greenspaces, trees and woodland help wildlife move, feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce. the long term protection of bankside habitats along the connected River Tees and Skerne corridors have tripled their otter and water vole populations;
- It creates healthy ecological networks, particularly important in the rural area where many isolated spaces exist. Use of agri-environment schemes has seen slow but notable success restoring traditional field patterns, hedgerows, wetlands and ponds; nesting lowland farmland birds like the Yellow Hammer as well as Harvest Mice now live in many cereal field margins;
- Trees and plants including reed beds can naturally filter pollution from new development and roads so that it does not reach soils and rivers, helping to improve soil and water quality and support healthy ecosystems. It will also help compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive by 2027;
- Building in space in new development for habitats particularly in the more densely developed parts of the urban area provides important stepping stones for wildlife and helps them adapt to climate change (see 3.1);
- It provides stimulating, biodiverse space to help people learn, understand and enjoy nature or can encourage informal recreation like fishing and bird watching.



Map 8: Distribution of Designated Wildlife Sites

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, DEFRA, 2011
www.defra.gov.uk

²Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, DEFRA, 2010 www.defra.gov.uk

³Acorn Dairy www.acorndairy.co.uk

Good Practice: Maidendale Local Nature Reserve

Over a number of years, the community led Maidendale Trust has transformed an area of low quality scrubland in the south east of town into a biodiversity rich wetland environment. A wide and varied mix of species now inhabit Maidendale; song birds, the broad bodied and four spot chaser dragonflies, the water soldier butterfly as well as the nationally protected Great Crested Newt and the regionally rare water soldier plant live and breed in the mosaic of rough grassland, reedbeds and trees that surround ten wildlife ponds. New boardwalks and link paths and an annual events programme has seen a significant increase in visitor numbers as well as providing a stimulating learning environment for school groups and local people alike.

Good Practice: Acorn Dairy

Operating from Archdeacon Newton, this 680 acre dairy farm became a fully operational organic farm in 2000. Their involvement in the Countryside Stewardship and Organic Entry Level Stewardship schemes has seen productivity and biodiversity successfully integrated 'helping nature keep its natural balance'³. Laying, widening and coppicing the hedges and replacing Hawthorne Quicks has seen a substantial and rapid increase in insects and small birds in the local landscape. Ten acres of land has been set aside and transformed into a thriving wildflower meadow. Wildlife ponds are now rich in amphibians and ground nesting birds, such as moorhens and ducks while sightings of Kestrels, Skylarks and Herons are more common than before.

Good Practice: Wildflower Meadow Management Programme

Over the last two years the Council's innovative greenspace management programme has successfully transformed the biodiversity value and multifunctionality of over 20ha of low quality amenity grassland. Careful management and new maintenance regimes have been adopted so that several strategic green spaces including the Skerne Corridor, Cocker Beck Valley and Baydale Meadows are managed as wildflower meadows. Extensive areas have been planted with wildflower mixes, as a result a steep rise in invertebrates and a corresponding rise in bird populations have been seen throughout the year. Short mown grass through the meadows follows desire lines so that people can walk to larger areas of amenity grass where informal recreation can also be enjoyed.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- 'Better, more, bigger and joined sites'¹ for a range of habitats and species in a 'coherent and resilient'¹ green infrastructure network will help reverse habitat fragmentation. Corridors do not have to be continuous, but more, higher quality spaces should be connected by wildlife corridors, smaller wildlife rich stepping stones and buffer zones;
- Designating more sites as Local Nature Reserves will protect more land for biodiversity to help meet the Natural England standard of 1ha Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population and to provide more space for outdoor classrooms;
- Providing new accessible wildlife friendly greenspace and treescapes, improving the biodiversity value of existing spaces and bankside habitats, particularly along and close to green corridors and in the Park East, College, Haughton West, Central, Bank Top and Lingfield wards will help achieve the local standard of 6ha of wildlife friendly space per 1000 population;
- By building into new development protected and priority habitats and species that are most at risk in the Tees Valley BAP like Calcareous grassland, species rich grassland, the Water Vole, Crustacean, White Clawed Crayfish, or by improving specific biodiversity poor spaces (see Action Plan), healthy natural ecosystems will be delivered.
- Existing protected habitats and species must be accommodated and appropriately mitigated in all new development;
- Improving lower quality Local Wildlife Sites and Hell Kettles SSSI (in unfavourable but recovering condition), in partnership with landowners will improve biodiversity value and create opportunities for appropriate access for education particularly in the urban fringe and rural area;
- Promote the 'vital role'¹ farmers and landowners by making sure that there are no tensions between incorporating wildlife friendly features (see 3.3) and supporting a productive landscape (see 3.6) so that a greater percentage of the Borough's land meets entry level and higher level requirements for agri-environment schemes. Area landscape partnerships may help deliver Borough wide initiatives in the long term;
- Protecting or restoring natural riparian zones and creating wildlife friendly sustainable drainage schemes in most new developments will help to improve soil and water quality and flow especially along the River Skerne, Cocker Beck and West Beck, attract protected and priority species, and ensure full compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive by 2027.

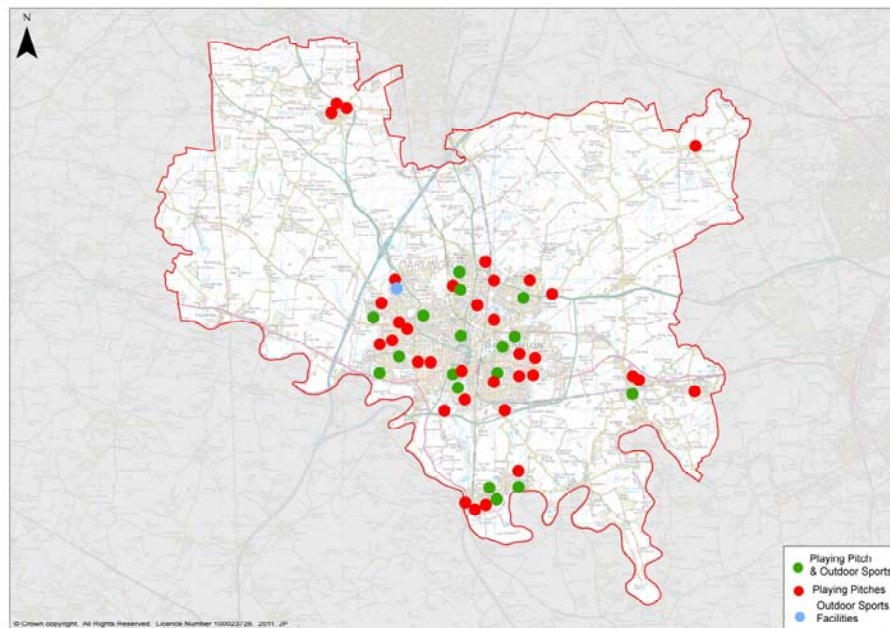
3.5 PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPORT, RECREATION AND PLAY

3.5.1 A range of multifunctional accessible greenspaces provide significant opportunities for people to enjoy a variety of recreation and sports activities as part of a healthy lifestyle, helping slow the rise in childhood obesity, treat depression and reduce cognitive decline important for Darlington's increasing older population. Most people in the urban area and main villages live close to a range of higher quality multifunctional strategic spaces like South Park, West Park, North Park and Brinkburn Denes as well as other smaller neighbourhood spaces where activities like walking, jogging and play or newer pursuits like Nordic walking, orienteering and Tai Chi can be enjoyed. A few parts of the Borough would benefit from more space, while quality improvements to others would increase multifunctionality.

3.5.2 Whether in a team or individually, numerous outdoor sports facilities including Eastbourne Sports Complex, provide for tennis, athletics, golf, bowling and cycling (Map 9), either on a competitive basis or for more casual play. But quality varies, particularly for tennis, athletics and cycling. Additionally 104 playing pitches provide valuable space for rugby union, cricket, hockey and football¹. But the majority are at schools and 40% do not provide community access out of school hours¹. Most public pitches in parks are also below average quality as a result of overuse, poor drainage, lack of changing facilities and car parking. Without significant improvements to management, maintenance and access at least 18.5 playing pitches will be needed to meet demand in the next few years¹. Complementing provision, private clubs provide higher quality facilities for a range of sports. Activities like horse riding and wind surfing can be enjoyed in the rural area.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- It helps promote healthy lifestyles; access to safe, quality green space generates higher use and more regular physical activity. A 10% rise in accessible green space is equivalent to a reduction in community health complaints of 5 years of age², important in Darlington where the difference in life expectancy between the best and worst wards is 13 years for men and 11.8 years for women³;
- Access to affordable, quality sports facilities will encourage more people to take part in sport, important in Darlington where participation levels are some of the lowest in the country³, reflected in the health inequalities that exist as a result of poor fitness;
- Use of wildlife friendly green spaces is 'closely associated'⁴ with improving mental well being and reducing the risk of depression by encouraging relaxation and reducing stress;
- Being able to enjoy a range of physical activities in green spaces enriches people's quality of life, helps raise self-esteem and confidence levels while strengthening community identity and civic pride;
- It promotes greater understanding of the natural and historic environment (see 3.4 and 3.7);
- It encourages more food to be grown locally in allotments reducing the Borough's carbon footprint and generating a more productive environment (see 3.1 and 3.6).



Map 9: Distribution of Sports Facilities

Good Practice: Blackwell Meadows playing pitch hub

Darlington Rugby Club make good use of its four high quality playing pitches; adult and junior members enjoy playing rugby union while a local football club regularly play there. Recognising the significant potential that existed to develop its facilities further, the club in partnership with Darlington College and the Council created the wider Blackwell Meadows site. It now includes two new adult football pitches relocated from Darlington College for use by members, College students and community teams. Potential exists for this hub site to continue to grow so that more people can enjoy taking part in sport in a safe, managed environment.

Good Practice: Adventurous, Natural Play Areas

Playing in a quality, exciting, natural environment is important to a child's development, improves their motor and social skills, their understanding of the natural world and encourages risk taking in a managed setting. Since 2009 the Playbuilder programme has helped fund ten natural, adventurous and inclusive play spaces transforming the quality and variety of Darlington's play offer. Natural wood climbing frames and swing bridges, sand pits, adventure mounds and climbing nets have revitalised Broken Scar play area while the new West Park play area has been successfully integrated with the natural landscape; water features, mounds and tunnels encourage climbing, crawling and interaction with nature. At Cocker Beck, a new artificial rock climbing boulder and climbing net set in natural mounds and woodland provides older children with an exciting alternative to the traditional play equipment that exists.

Good Practice: Brinkburn Denes

An important, strategic park in a densely developed part of town, Brinkburn Denes did not meet modern day needs. In 2010, a £878,500 Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund grant was secured to fund the restoration of the Denes. New bridges, seats and signs have been put up throughout so that people can easily and safely move around and between the Denes. Better lighting along popular cross routes has made the space a more desirable place for the whole community to visit. New entrances have made the park more appealing, encouraging passers-by to visit and use the park for recreation. Alongside this a new adventurous play area has been installed encouraging positive use by all ages and the tennis courts have been resurfaced increasing participation in sports activities particularly in the summer months.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- To promote active, healthy lifestyles; some parts of the Central, South West and North East urban area would benefit from easier access to parks, informal recreation space and children's play areas, more allotment space is needed across the Borough (see 3.6) and most people, particularly those living in the densely developed inner area would benefit from access to more wildlife friendly greenspace;
- Improving connectivity between green spaces, particularly along river corridors and between and within new and existing housing areas, will help encourage their active use;
- Enhancing quality and multifunctionality of specific green spaces or redesigning some existing green spaces will help address small gaps in provision and encourage more positive recreational activity;
- Ensuring that new development provides sufficient green space to meet the needs of future residents;
- Improving the quality of existing public pitches so they can accommodate more matches at peak times particularly for junior football;
- Securing more community access to affordable sports facilities particularly at schools will widen the availability of quality sports facilities close to home;
- In the long term, create an additional strategic multi sport, multi pitch hub site for competitive and casual play will help meet the demand for pitch sports;
- Incorporating green exercise equipment in existing and new spaces to encourage healthy lifestyles particularly for those who do not wish to participate in organised activities or team sports.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy, PMP, 2009 www.darlington.gov.uk

² Building natural value for sustainable economic development: The green infrastructure valuation toolkit user guide, Genecon LLP, 2011 www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk

³ Darlington Joint Single Needs Assessment, DBC, 2010 www.darlington.gov.uk

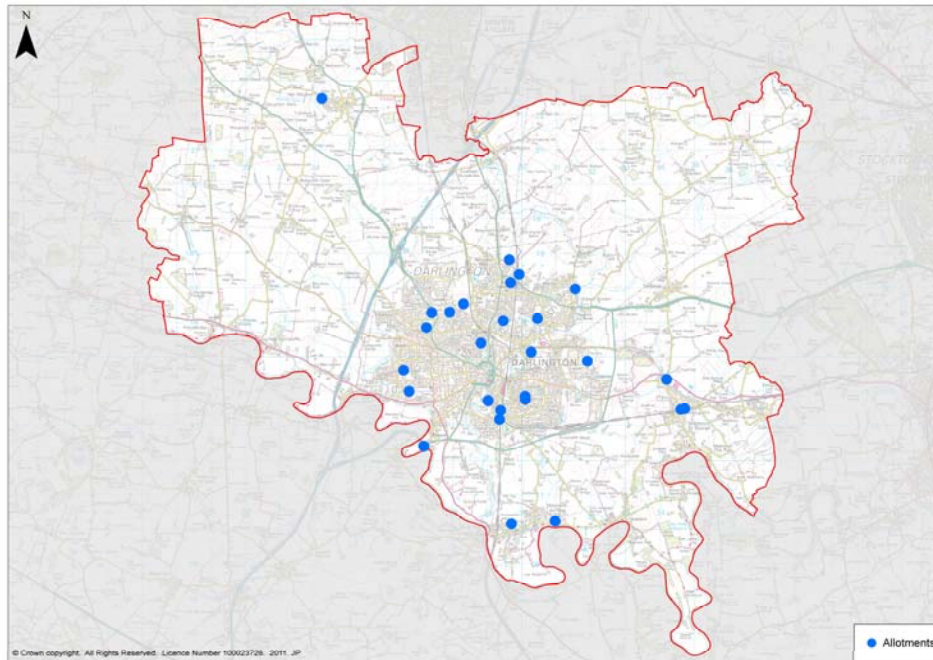
⁴Darlington Play and Free Time Strategy, DBC, 2007 www.darlington.gov.uk

3.6 GENERATING PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES

3.6.1 With 80% of the Borough being in the rural area, much of Darlington remains a significant working, productive environment. Arable farming dominates the richer soils of the lowland south and east producing grain for animal food as well as a good local annual potato crop for the national potato market. Pastoral farming dominates the north and west; cattle and sheep are reared as food for the national meat market, while dairy herds provide milk and dairy products to the local market. Increasingly, allotments help people grow food in the local landscape, although availability of space is an increasing concern. Improving the sustainable management of the green infrastructure network, particularly in the rural area and urban fringe, can in other ways, increase its productive capacity. Renewable energy is becoming a more common feature in the landscape; several single wind turbines supply homes and businesses with renewable electricity while permission has been granted for a wind farm at Moorhouse in the north east of the Borough.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- A diverse, profitable, sustainable food and farming sector makes an important contribution to a strong rural and urban economy by supporting farmers and local employees and encouraging more people to buy food locally;
- It provides an income for an increasing number of specialist local food operators who produce and sell high quality locally made products including jams, meat and vegetables at the Darlington farmers market or from farm shops like those at Burtree Farm, Piercebridge Organic Farm, Hurworth Moor Farm and Ulnaby Hall and other local outlets;
- It can support ‘new opportunities’¹ for farmers and landowners; whether creating regionally distinctive food and drink like Archers Jersey ice cream or providing space for energy crops, like biomass and biofuels to supply a local market for renewable energy, diversification can provide a new or secondary income stream;
- 27 allotment sites with over 900 increasingly sought after plots, provide space for residents to grow their own fresh fruit and vegetables in the urban area and the main villages (Map 10). Six are self managed by an allotment holders committee who lease the site from the Council, generating greater community ownership of the natural environment (see 3.7), the others are provided by Parish Councils, private owners and the Council;
- It provides flexible space where value and variety can be added; the new Darlington Orchard has 120 native Keswick Codling and Lane’s Prince Albert fruit trees around the urban area, increasing local fruit production;
- It has the capacity to accommodate renewable energy particularly in the urban fringe and rural area; wind turbines or growing crops for biomass and biofuels can reduce the Borough’s carbon footprint (see 3.1).



Map 10: Darlington's Allotment Provision

Good Practice: Burtree Farm Shop

Beginning with the farmer selling free range eggs, this notable rural enterprise, quickly and successfully expanded into an award-winning venture selling a range of quality, wholesome farm produce; home grown chickens, home made cakes, biscuits and jams are now available to the many local people and visitors who shop there each week. More recently, locally produced meat, potatoes, organic vegetable and fruit boxes and organic soaps from other local suppliers are conveniently available in one place to meet local demand while securing a valuable income for the farmer and several other local producers.

Good Practice: Archers Jersey Ice Cream Parlour

Operating near Walworth, this family run enterprise began in 2002 after an opportunity was taken to use the 1,500,000 litres of surplus Jersey milk for ice cream. This popular award winning tourist facility now regularly attracts the old and young from Darlington and from nearby Teesdale for a relatively inexpensive day out in the countryside. Many simply enjoy a relaxing stroll around the farm while enjoying the varieties of ice cream and refreshments available. Others take the opportunity to walk into the surrounding Walworth countryside. Schools and community groups regularly make the most of its location, as a valuable outdoor classroom. From its small scale beginnings this business now provides a diverse, profitable income for the farmer and supports several local employees.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Encourage appropriate rural diversification initiatives to generate new or secondary income for farmers and landowners, support local employment in the rural area and encourage greater use of the countryside;
- Change the management of and/or extend existing allotment sites, make other green spaces more productive, create community gardens and new allotments particularly close to existing or planned residential areas like at Lingfield Point to help meet demand and make Darlington more food sustainable (see 3.1);
- Support initiatives to plant more fruit trees, particularly in the urban fringe to make Darlington more food sustainable and generate more community ownership of the environment (see 3.7);
- Promote the community led Darlington: It's Growing (DIG) to bring together people, schools, allotment holders, local food shops and new food businesses to encourage people to grow food locally and make better use of public and private spaces;
- Make the most of the 'significant potential'² that exists to produce biomass and biofuels and provide space for renewable energy locally, particularly in the urban fringe and rural area (see 3.1). They should be carefully managed and integrated with other green infrastructure functions and meet planning requirements.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, 2008
www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

²Update to 2009 Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study, Entec, 2010

3.7 ENHANCING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- 3.7.1 Over the last few years, there has been a growing appreciation of the importance green infrastructure can have in our daily lives which has led to ‘more people being willing to contribute to its protection and enhancement’¹. This interest has been actively captured through numerous ‘hands on’ opportunities; Darlington’s eight Friends of Parks Groups like those at South Park and Stanhope Park, seven Friends of Local Nature Reserves Groups, seven self managed allotment sites and the Darlington Green Spaces Forum are led by enthusiastic residents who work tirelessly to improve their local environment. Others help organisations like the Durham Wildlife Trust, the Durham Bat Group, Groundwork or the RSPB with a specific project.
- 3.7.2 Local people are best placed to help decide what is needed in their local environment. Greater community involvement of local green space management has led to numerous improvements to green infrastructure across the Borough, in many cases generating more active positive use of the space. It also reduces a source of conflict between people and the Council or other maintenance providers, in relation to the ongoing maintenance of green infrastructure

Why is green infrastructure important?

- It provides volunteers with opportunities to develop new skills, improve health and well being (see 3.5), enjoy the outdoors and interact with people who share a common interest. Experience gained through working with specialist organisations like the Environment Agency at Cocker Beck or County Durham Environmental Trust at Drinkfield Marsh Nature Reserve can also prove attractive to employers;
- It is a useful living ‘outdoor classroom delivering a full range of curriculum needs’². Using a ‘hands on’ approach through structured programmes involving pond dipping and mini beast safaris provided by the South Park Outside In Education centre or through informal exploration can stimulate thought, interest and understanding of the natural world;
- It can generate civic pride and community ownership; Friends Groups regularly use their spaces and are best placed to help put together a management plan to make sure their space is well looked after and provides facilities and activities that local people want. By working with the Council and other partners, they are better equipped to apply for external funding from organisations like the National Lottery to see improvements take place more quickly on the ground;
- Attractive spaces that are well managed and maintained generate positive use and encourage a variety of activities by all age groups and abilities (see 3.5). Involving local people in their design, management and maintenance helps address local needs. Children and young people in particular can provide valuable insights into what makes a good playspace to help reduce pockets of anti social behaviour that may exist.

Good Practice: North Lodge Park Bandstand Restoration

Laid out in the C19, North Lodge Park has a traditional Victorian design centred around its Grade II listed bandstand. Over time this historic feature had fallen into disrepair having a negative impact on the quality of the surrounding park and the use of the space. Following a lengthy process the highly dedicated Friends of North Lodge Park successfully secured £216,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Fair Share Trust, Garfield Weston, Big Lottery Community Spaces and the Council for its restoration. The perseverance of the Friends Group has led to this outstanding heritage asset being fully restored and once again provides a lively focal point for many community events while adding quality to the setting of this historic park.

Good Practice: Management Plans

The Darlington Green Spaces Forum including the Council, rangers and external partners like Groundwork has pioneered a way of empowering Friends Groups to play a bigger role in the management of their local spaces. Under this new initiative, management plans have been agreed for several strategic green spaces like North Park and Maidendale Local Nature Reserve. Short, dynamic and easy to use they are updated annually and identify works needed, funding required and responsibilities for delivery, including maintenance. Written by local people for their local space, plans reflect local needs and interests. Some have prioritised training to help improve the wildflower diversity of a space while others have undertaken monitoring of priority species like butterflies.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Establish new Friends Groups at strategic greenspaces and at newly designated Nature Reserves, self management associations at new allotments and promote membership of existing Groups so that the community are fully involved in making decisions about their local environment;
- Work with community groups to improve people's skills and knowledge so that they can help deliver more specialist projects and secure external funding to deliver improvements;
- Bringing the local community into the centre of the delivery of the Parks and Countryside events programme will generate positive use and make sure events meet local needs;
- Promote the DIG campaign to secure more community ownership of local food initiatives;
- Encourage the use of maintenance levy schemes particularly at the strategic development locations (see 3.9) to secure ongoing improvements and maintenance of strategic green infrastructure;
- Develop management plans with Friends Groups for all strategic spaces, Local Nature Reserves and newly designated strategic spaces to address design, quality and maintenance concerns in the long term;
- Engage specialist expertise partners to add value to the green infrastructure network.

Good Practice: West Park Green Infrastructure Levy

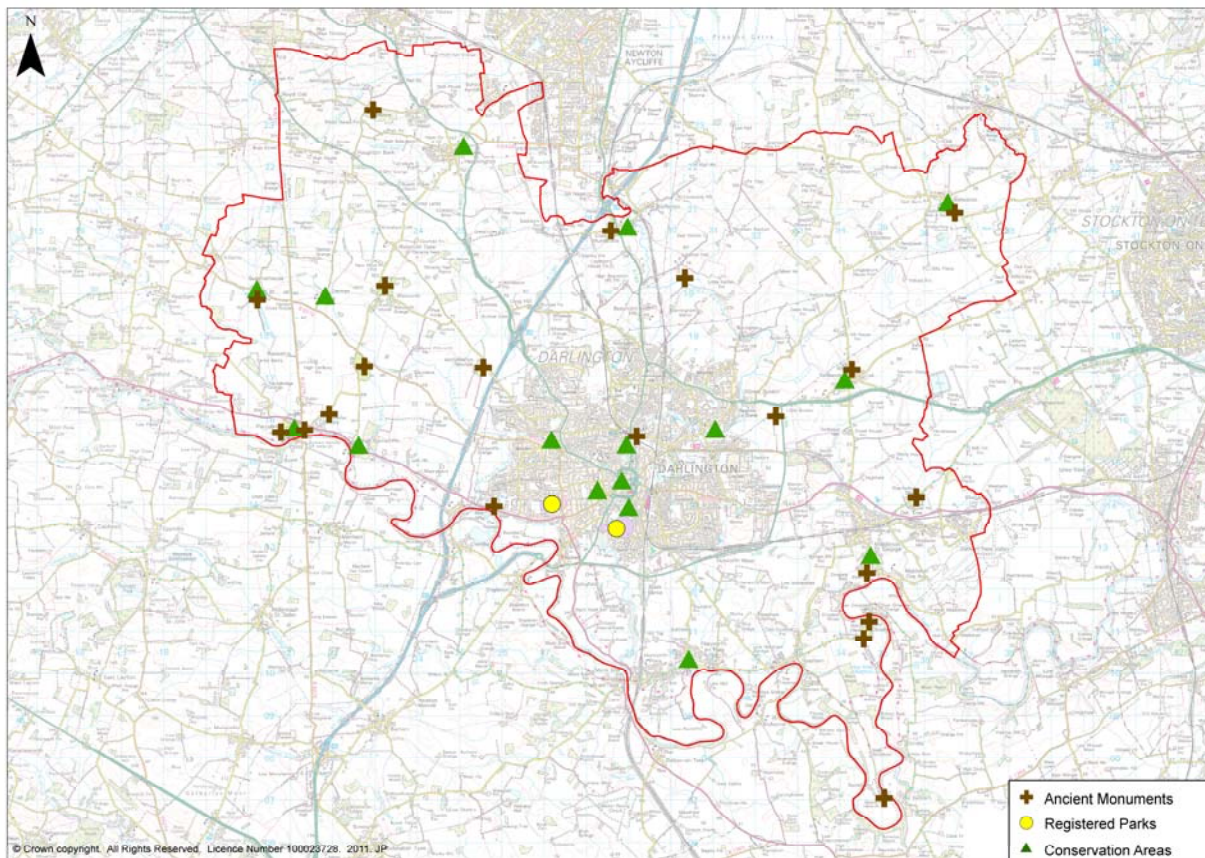
Significant green infrastructure was incorporated into the design of the West Park development. To secure its quality in the long term an innovative levy scheme was established; all 700 properties pay an annual £50 levy into a central fund to secure its maintenance as well as ongoing improvements to meet local needs. Independently managed by the County Durham Environmental Trust, with a local steering group including the Friends of West Park and the developer Bussey and Armstrong, they decide how the levy should be spent, bid for grants to fund improvements and help educate the local community.

3.8 PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.8.1 Heritage is more than traditional buildings; features like ancient ruins, historic parks, village greens and green corridors provide a glimpse of Darlington's long and distinctive agricultural, industrial, railway and Quaker heritage. Access to them is 'vital to our self understanding, our sense of connectedness to the past and to the future, and [are] valuable in creating a sense of place'¹. Features are many and varied; twenty one Scheduled Monuments including the deserted medieval Ulnaby village or the Registered Parks and Gardens of South Park and West Cemetery let visitors explore and understand our social heritage in a high quality green setting. Many of the 500 Listed Buildings found across the Borough also protect green spaces like the Darlington Memorial Hospital Garden. Other green infrastructure including churchyards, parks, trees and street trees add to the charm, character or appearance of the Borough's 18 Conservation Areas (Map 11). Green heritage extends into the rural area; many villages like Bishopton, Great Burdon and Summerhouse are clustered around a central green, providing the focus for the surrounding built environment, while seven landscaped historic parklands like Walworth Castle are unique features in an otherwise productive landscape. A few assets like the Piercebridge Roman Fort are now tourist attractions, but large parts of Darlington's history can only be enjoyed from a distance; most are on private land that the public rarely see.

Why is green infrastructure important?

- It provides an insight into Darlington's unique past; the traditional Victorian design of South Park and its listed bandstand and fountain help us understand how our ancestors enjoyed their recreation time and encourages exploration of the surrounding natural environment;
- It creates an attractive setting for many historic built features; spaces like St Cuthbert's Churchyard and the Quakers Burial Ground all add to the specialness of the built environment, without which the surrounding buildings would have less interest and value;
- Attractive green space particularly in Conservation Areas makes 'a significant contribution to the qualities and character of the area'²; South Park, Southend, Green Park and Stanhope Green in the West End Conservation Area provide a high quality setting that attracts people to live there;
- Quality green space adds value to heritage assets like the Head of Steam providing space for more interactive features and events, encouraging visitors to stay longer and can generate revenue to support the long term maintenance of the asset (see 3.8);
- It has influenced the form of the landscape; in the rural area most Scheduled Monuments like the Bishopton Motte are only distinguishable by unique landforms, ditches and cuts. Historic trade routes like Salters Lane or the former Darlington to Stockton railway line form the basis of many green corridors we see today (see 3.3);
- Open green wedges and village greens help villages and neighbourhoods retain their distinct identity. Several former villages like Houghton and Cockerton are now part of the town, but still have a village green at their core, distinguishing them from other parts of the urban area (see 3.3).



Map 11: Darlington's Heritage Assets (excluding Listed Buildings)

For more detailed information, maps and boundaries go to www.darlington.gov.uk/conservation

Good Practice: Rockcliffe Hall Restoration

Dating from 1774, Rockcliffe Hall, Hurworth is set in an enviable position in a curve of the River Tees. The hall and much of its 375 acre parkland was landscaped by the distinguished architect and Quaker Alfred Waterhouse using rare and exotic trees collected by the owners. By the early 21st Century the estate was in a state of neglect but has since been sensitively converted into a destination hotel set within a 350 acre Championship Golf course. The course follows the many historic and natural landscape contours that remain from the 19th Century landscaping, complemented by modern additions of lakes, wetland and woodland. Permissive access via the Rockcliffe Loop provides opportunities for greater understanding of this natural and built historic environment for visitors.

Good Practice: South Park Regeneration Scheme

Laid out in 1851 to 'be used as a park or promenade and a recreation ground for the public at large'³ South Park has been an important focus for sport and recreation in Darlington ever since. Protected as a Registered Park as a result of the many built and natural features that remain from that date, its fine exotic specimen planting and tree lined walks reflect the interests of botany and horticulture that were popular then, while the grass embankment sloping down to the river retains the original Edwardian bedding pattern. In 2005 a £3.9m Heritage Lottery Fund grant helped restore this important historic park; original materials were used to restore the Grade II listed Terracotta Fountain and the original pattern 279 was used to repair the bandstand. Today South Park is a popular, Green Flag park where heritage sits comfortably alongside modern features including a skate bowl.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Many of the Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings and Conservation Areas, would benefit from signage and interpretation including innovative use of public art to encourage greater understanding and use of the wider green infrastructure network;
- A new Heritage Trail from the Head of Steam would help connect smaller spaces and historic railway assets along its route, bringing many spaces to life while attracting more visitors to the Head of Steam itself generating income to help with maintenance;
- Greater awareness of accessible heritage features could promote access to other less well used parts of the green infrastructure network (see 3.2) and see greater use of other visitor attractions (see 3.9);
- The ongoing conservation of archaeological sites, including deserted villages, and surrounding patterns of land use and enclosure, including ridge and furrow will help protect them in the long term;
- Improving access at natural heritage sites particularly ancient woodlands, historic parks and gardens can make space accessible for all and more suitable for modern day activities while improving the quality and biodiversity value of the environment.

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

²World class places: The Government's strategy for improving quality of place

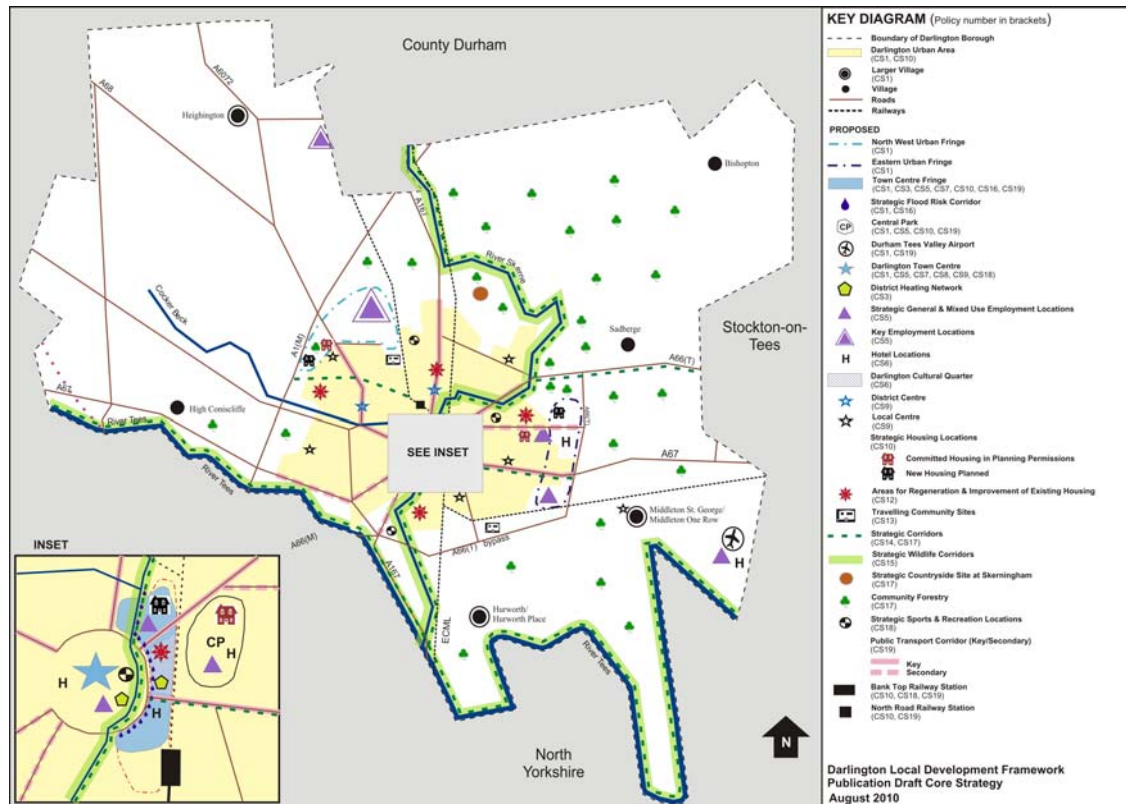
³Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, 2000 www.darlington.gov.uk/conservation

3.9 CREATING A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

3.9.1 A quality well designed, planned and managed green infrastructure network underpins Darlington's vision to continue to be an 'attractive, comfortable, accessible and green...friendly, market town'¹ where a high quality of life can be enjoyed. Increasingly it also provides the 'raw materials for [Darlington's] economy'² and plays 'an important role'² in providing the setting for inward investment and development, offering comparative locational advantages that come from environmental quality, which can help attract and retain highly skilled workers. High value businesses that have a choice of location tend to put a higher premium on quality of place, particularly important to attract investment to the town centre, other retail centres and in the key strategic development locations around the town (Map 12).

Why is green infrastructure important?

- Properly planned and integrated green infrastructure will create quality of place and a unique identity, helping integrate new development with existing landscapes and neighbourhoods. It can create attractive gateways to improve the visual appearance of Darlington particularly at the strategic development locations;
- It benefits development values; houses near a quality greenspace are on average up to 5% more expensive than those further away², with residents willing to pay more to live close to or overlook a greenspace;
- Investment in the green infrastructure of existing development can help attract new business to the Borough. New green infrastructure at Riverside Park Industrial Estate, Middlesbrough led to an increase in occupancy from 40% to 78% attracting over £1m of private investment and new, high profile users²;
- In new development spaces like community gardens, children's play areas and allotments provide 'an opportunity for small, personal interactions'³ important in establishing a new community or linking new and old neighbourhoods;
- It can pass on financial benefits to residents; customers who handle their own surface water through surface water drainage systems can have reduced bills; in north-west England this is £35.33 per year. Green flood mitigation can help reduce insurance premiums²;
- A strategic, well connected green infrastructure network can help sustain Darlington as an attractive visitor destination particularly for nature and heritage-based tourism at places like the Head of Steam or Piercebridge Roman Fort (see 3.8);
- It helps generate income and sustain employment for nearby local shops and services year round and particularly from one off events. Many parks and larger greenspaces are ideal venues for fireworks shows and family fun days. On and off-site retail and catering, like the South Park Café or from temporary attractions on the day all help promote local permanent and seasonal jobs.



Map 12: Core Strategy Strategic Development Locations

Good Practice: Pedestrian Heart

Pedestrian Heart has created a fresh, quality landscape where pedestrians are the priority. Unveiled in 2004 more pedestrian friendly streets, particularly to areas with quality independent businesses such as Grange Road, Skinnergate and Duke Street encourage more people to visit and stay longer. More open space at Prospect Place, West Row and Blackwellgate was created for pavement cafes, entertainment, exhibitions and promotions boosting the local economy so Darlington can better compete with the rest of the region. Unique public art including the water cascade and Life Pulse encourage people, particularly children to explore the town centre environment in a different way. Today the Town Centre provides a comfortable, enjoyable visitor experience which benefits from a positive image and marketing tool; helping to promote a quality environment ready for further investment.

Good Practice: Ulnaby Medieval Village

Making the most of its location, the owners have created a thriving rural tourist attraction at Ulnaby Farm. Focusing on the unique appeal of its protected medieval village, a range of visitor attractions has been provided on site, generating better value for money and more on site expenditure. Visitors can get up close to the medieval village, enjoy seeing rare breeds that live on the farm, children can enjoy the large play area while families enjoy a picnic nearby. The farmshop and tea room attract visitors in their own right, while events can also be held on site catered directly from the farm. School trips regularly visit making the most of this unique historic environment.

Good Practice: West Park

The integration of quality green infrastructure in the West Park development has made it a popular choice for young professionals, families and older people alike. While the park itself provides an attractive mix of green space functions available close to home, the green corridors and wildlife areas help provide an attractive setting to live in. The clever use of public art helps create a distinctive environment with a unique identity. All provide a significant marketing tool to attract people to live in the area.

How can we improve Darlington's green infrastructure?

- Promote appropriate nature and heritage based tourism attractions that provide a range of activities on site, to provide better value for money and generate more on-site expenditure. These also have the potential to attract more overnight visitors who are likely to 'significantly'² contribute most to the growth of the Borough's tourism economy;
- Provide greater access to, interpretation and publicity of heritage, natural features and walks in quality landscapes including along the River Tees to encourage greater use of local shops and services (see 3.2)
- Integrating green infrastructure and public art into new development, particularly at the strategic development locations, will help create a distinct identity for new neighbourhoods that can be used as a valuable marketing and promotional tool;
- Improving access to river corridors particularly in the Town Centre Fringe will create a more desirable location for people to live and work, may have an impact on the value of property and land and help to attract investors to the Borough;
- Make sure maintenance is secured for new greenspaces so that the value of new development remains in the long term particularly in the strategic development locations (see 3.7)

Where Can I Find Out More?

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

²Building natural value for sustainable economic development: The green infrastructure valuation toolkit user guide, Genecon LLP, 2011 www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk

4.0 DELIVERING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.0.1 The accompanying Action Plan provides a strategic, coordinated framework for the future development and management of the Borough's green infrastructure to 2026. It should be read alongside this Strategy. Value, connectivity and functionality will be added to the existing network, more greenspace functions will be provided to bring benefits to people, wildlife and place helping to deliver the vision and objectives in the Strategy.
- 4.0.2 Many challenges face the Council and its partners in delivering the Action Plan with limited resources. It will be a living Action Plan, giving the Council and its partners flexibility to maximise Darlington's green infrastructure resource; updated each April, new projects can be added to reflect changing priorities, needs and resources, while completed schemes will be removed. This will ensure that the necessary resources will be secured to deliver each project within the appropriate timeframe according to the priorities identified. It also makes it much easier to coordinate green infrastructure projects with new development and as part of other wider initiatives.
- 4.0.3 The focus of the Action Plan is around twelve green corridors and the Rural Area. It is made up of the four sub regional, strategic green corridors identified in the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy in Darlington, as well as eight smaller local green corridors, identified because of their scale, as well as their current and potential importance for access, recreation, landscape, heritage or ecological value (Map 14):

1. Strategic green corridors:

- 1 River Tees Corridor
- 3 River Skerne Corridor
- 4 River Skerne Corridor To West Park/Faverdale
- 5 Darlington, Middleton St. George, A66/A67 Corridor to Stockton

The numbers are same as the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy; there is no corridor 2.

2. Local green corridors:

- A Former Barnard Castle Trackbed
- B Cocker Beck
- C West Beck
- D Baydale Beck
- E Salters Lane
- F Nunnery Lane-Cemetery Lane Corridor
- G Central Park Corridor
- H A66 Corridor

3. Rural area: includes all other green infrastructure outside the urban area.

- 4.0.4 The corridors include a mix of public and private land. The identification of land within these corridors does not necessarily mean that there is public access or that such access would be available in the

future. They incorporate strategic green infrastructure including parks, Local Nature Reserves, sporting hubs, community woodland, wildlife corridors and other large green spaces and connect to the strategic development locations.

- 4.0.5 The aim is to create an interconnecting network so many of the corridors interconnect. As a result of the strategic value corridors 1, 3, 4 and 5 have more projects than the local corridors. Where possible, projects have been evenly spread across different corridors to help maximise delivery opportunities within identified timeframes.

4.1 DARLINGTON GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

4.1.1 For each strategic or local corridor and the Rural Area one or more projects have been identified. Making the most of the spaces and features that exist along and close to each corridor, they reflect the specific issues and opportunities that each corridor and the Rural Area face. Some are new, others are long standing committed projects while some are under development. Some of the projects are straightforward, others are more challenging. Some help increase use or improve management, others support delivery or provide guidance on how to create the change. Potential for delivery within the timeframe has also been a key consideration. Comments made by the Green Space Forum in August 2010 have informed the process.

4.1.2 For each corridor the Action Plan will:

- a. Set out a long term vision describing its key characteristics in 2026;
- b. Identify one or more significant projects to deliver the corridor's vision and the GI Strategy's objectives (identified by a symbol in the left hand column);
- c. Set out a series of actions for each project that can be delivered together or individually;
- d. Set out timescales for development and delivery of projects and actions;
- e. Identify lead partners and other delivery partners;
- f. Identify funding sources and status - whether under development, committed, to be funded through development or to be confirmed;
- g. Provide a framework for monitoring project delivery;
- h. Provide a detailed map for each corridor.

4.1.3 Over time some of the actions may become projects in their own right. This will be considered as part of the annual update every April. All detailed project management information is summarised in a technical schedule.

4.2 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

4.2.1 Darlington's green infrastructure network and the functions it performs are so wide ranging that the successful delivery of the Strategy must be the collective responsibility of a broad range of stakeholders, including community groups, health organisations, sport and recreation organisations, transport bodies, education facilities, developers, landowners, Local Nature Partnerships, local residents as well as the Council. Joint working will make sure that organisations play to their respective strengths, while potentially there could be a higher success rate in securing external funding for key projects.

4.2.2 All will be represented on the Darlington Green Infrastructure Delivery Group responsible for:

- Updating and revising the Green Infrastructure Strategy and its Action Plan;
- Helping to secure and coordinate funding and other resources;
- Promoting and implementing the strategy;
- Leading on monitoring and evaluation.

Promoting community participation

4.2.3 Friends Groups, Allotment Associations, other community groups and residents are already very active in the ongoing management, maintenance and development of Darlington's green infrastructure. But we need to involve more people by developing skills and knowledge so that they can play a more active role in the successful delivery of the Strategy. Opportunities will be made for community groups and residents to become more actively involved in the planning, delivery and on-going management of a local park, allotment or nature reserve by:

- Commenting on project, management and maintenance proposals;
- Getting actively involved in the planning and delivery of projects to improve their local space or promote greater use;
- Joining a Friends Group or an Allotment Association and taking on direct responsibility for the development or on-going management.

5.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 It is important to the success of this Strategy that measures are put in place to:

- evaluate the impact that the Strategy is having;
- monitor delivery of the Action Plan; and
- use this information to review both the Strategy and Action Plan in the medium and long term.

5.2 Each project in the accompanying Action Plan will have milestones and targets for delivery which will be used to update the living Action Plan. The Darlington Green Infrastructure Delivery Group will monitor and review the Strategy and Action Plan; the results will be published in an annual progress report to be taken to the Council's Place Scrutiny Committee. Annual monitoring will be used to help show progress, identify areas where delivery of the Strategy is not taking place and provide vital information to feedback to partners and stakeholders.

5.3 A review of this Strategy will be considered where:

- There is significant change in European and national legislation, or national, regional or sub regional policy; or
- The Darlington Green Infrastructure Delivery Group considers that the Green Infrastructure Strategy is insufficiently effective in delivering its vision and objectives.

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES

Convention on Biological Diversity, UN, 2010 www.cbd.int
www.ec.europa.eu/environment/water

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 www.legislation.gov.uk
Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, DEFRA, 2010 www.defra.gov.uk
The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, DEFRA, 2010 www.defra.gov.uk
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, DEFRA, 2011 www.defra.gov.uk
Green Infrastructure Guidance, Natural England, 2009 www.naturalengland.org.uk
Nature Nearby, Natural England, 2010 www.naturalengland.org.uk
Great Outdoors: How Our Natural Health Service Uses Green Space to Improve Wellbeing, Faculty of Public Health, 2010 www.fph.org.uk
Future Health: Sustainable Places for health and well being, CABI 2009 www.cabi.org.uk
UK Biodiversity Action Plan, DEFRA, 1994, www.jncc.defra.gov.uk
National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners www.nsalg.org.uk

World class places: The Government's strategy for improving quality of place, DCLG, 2009 www.communities.gov.uk
Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, DCMS, 2007 www.culture.gov.uk
Local Green Infrastructure Helping communities make the most of their landscape, Landscape Institute, 2011 www.landscapeinstitute.org

Leading the Way: Regional Economic Strategy for the North East, One North East, 2006 www.onenortheast.co.uk

Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, 2008 www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk
Tees Valley Economic and Regeneration Statement of Ambition, Tees Valley Unlimited, 2011 www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy, Tees Valley Unlimited, 2010 www.climate-northeast.com
Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan, Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership, 2011 www.teesvalleybiodiversity.org
Building natural value for sustainable economic development: The green infrastructure valuation toolkit user guide, Genecon LLP, 2011 www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk
Refreshed Five Year Strategic Plan 2009-2014, NHS County Durham and Darlington, 2010 www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk
www.keystothepast.info
Darlington Joint Single Needs Assessment, DBC, 2010 www.darlington.gov.uk
Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Bowles Green Limited 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk
Third Local Transport Plan, DBC, 2011 www.darlington.gov.uk
Darlington Play and Free Time Strategy, DBC, 2007 www.darlington.gov.uk
Darlington Tree and Woodland Strategy, DBC, 2011 www.darlington.gov.uk
Darlington Allotments Strategy, DBC, 2011 www.darlington.gov.uk
www.darlington.gov.uk/conservation

LDF Documents and Evidence Base www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy
LDF Core Strategy, DBC, 2011
LDF Design of New Development SPD, DBC, 2011
Darlington Open Space Strategy, DBC, 2007
Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy, PMP, 2009
Darlington Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy, 2009
Darlington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, JBA Consulting, 2009
Darlington Characterisation Study, DBC, 2009
Update to 2009 Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study, Entec, 2010