

HE3 Comments – Referring to HE3 Specifically

HE3 – General		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL009	Disgusted at the Council's plans for housing on the historic Blackwell Grange Parkland.	
BL073	Reason for purchasing family home was to live in a quiet, semi-rural location, with an extremely attractive outlook in an area of natural beauty adjacent to golf club and countryside. This was reflected in the purchase price of our house.	
BL073	Reduce the value of my property.	
BL074	One positive note, perhaps the wheelie bin depot on the land will be moved.	
BL074	What provision has been made for potential new residents re Doctors surgery and schools for children?	
BL109iv	Openness and trees make this the most attractive park in Darlington, which has recently become public. Selling off the land for financial gain is wicked and will benefit developers rather than the Council.	
BL109iv	Concern that alternative options for maintaining and restoring the park land have not been fully explored, such as lottery funding, land trusts and volunteers. Concern that calculations on how much maintenance will cost and how that would be raised through a levy have not been done.	Investigate innovative schemes which preserve open space and character as alternatives to housing and for attracting businesses to the town
BL160	Dismayed to see the plans increase the dwelling numbers. Has there been any market analysis undertaken to justify the increase? While there is a growing and ageing population it is not feasible to assume that there is a realistic demand for older people wanting to move from their homes. Typically older people only move in response to a crisis (health decline, etc.) there are no pre-emptive decision makers in terms of housing future and there is no mention that these dwellings would be assisted living / warden controlled.	

BL160	It is reasonable to conclude that the more you build, the less 'executive' or desirable the location becomes and thus the price of the new housing and those around it.	
BL160	Despite consultation and objections raised, it appears a done deal in balancing the Council's books. Can the Council Clarify the expected build rate of dwellings? It is unfair to expect residents to endure building site noise, dirt and disruption over a number of years as was intimated in the first round of council's responses.	
BL160	Will play little part in attracting business to the area.	
BL160	Should be reduction in dwellings (but optimal situation would be no dwellings).	
BL162	Proposed sites inappropriate as the majority of them in areas of historic significance where no development should be pursued, and have been hugely enlarged in the second consultation to include apartment blocks and roads through the parkland as well as possible large breaches in the listed perimeter wall.	
BL162	Scoring system used to select the parklands for development is flawed.	
BL050	Concern about misleading use of the term 'slightly' when describing changes to density for HE3. The site has exactly doubled in density and has been enlarged at both ends; this is significant not 'slightly'.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The Core Strategy also sets out how the borough will help meet a small sub-regional need for small numbers of top-end executive housing, to support economic growth in the borough and wider Tees Valley area, which could reduce in-commuting.</p> <p>The various studies that have been undertaken were to provide as much information as possible on the site, and the surrounding area, and to inform the development of the masterplan.</p> <p>Detailed comments and suggestions regarding the development will be taken into account in the detailed design of any development, and residents will have the opportunity to engage in this through the planning application process.</p>		

Loss of value of property is not a planning matter. Research undertaken by London School of Economics found that prices of existing houses sometimes fell while construction was going on, but once the developments were completed, the local areas generally moved with the market. Researchers could find no evidence of longer term negative impacts.

Impact on a person's view is not a planning matter, though impact on an individual's amenity and the amenity of an area is. The residential amenity of existing and future residents would be considered as part of any development design and layout at the planning application stage.

Contributions to support additional school places would be required as part of a legal agreement between the developer and the Council as part of the planning application process.

Alternative sources of funding such as Heritage Lottery Fund have been investigated. However, either the parkland fails to meet the criteria for funding and/or the funding organisation requires a 5% contribution for schemes below £1 million or 10% for schemes above £1 million. In addition, revenue funding is time limited after which the scheme is required to be self-financing. Therefore, at present, the proposed residential development plus the levy from new residents is the only mechanism to guarantee funding for the restoration and enhancement of the remaining parkland, the creation of new wildlife habitats and increased public access. This is the best way, at the moment, of ensuring that the remaining parkland is enjoyed by future generations. However, if new opportunities emerge, alternative ways of funding the restoration and enhancement of the parkland should be considered, particularly to support ongoing maintenance and management that may otherwise fall short of target revenues if development does not progress as quickly or in the amounts being planned for.

Darlington has an aging population and the Council's Supported Housing Strategy Appendix 2 calculates that by 2025 there will be a requirement for an additional 163 Extra Care for sale units and an additional 981 Sheltered for sale units for people aged over 75. These figures do not include the needs of people below the age of 75. The clear message is there is a shortage of choice for people who want to purchase specialist elderly accommodation. This is also identified in the adopted Core Strategy.

There is a balance between the amount of development and the continued attractiveness of the parkland setting. However, the proposed development will be high quality, high specification, in a very attractive parkland setting, in a desirable residential suburb. It is reasonable to assume that the prices of the new dwellings will be higher than those of existing dwellings – although, that is not a planning matter.

There are no roads proposed through the parkland, only footpaths, and no large breaches proposed in the listed perimeter wall.

The build rate will be determined by the market.

The scoring system used was revisited and, although there is disagreement over some of the results, there was one factual error which has since been rectified. However, this has not altered the overall conclusions that Blackwell is the most sustainable and appropriate location for top-end executive housing.

The proposals have been informed by the comments received from statutory consultees, who accept the development of housing in this area in principle.

The suggested increase in density is still significantly below the average density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare for the Borough as a whole in the Core Strategy.

All comments received from residents will be considered as part of the decision-making process and residents would also have the opportunity to take part in the planning application process.

HE3 - Master plan		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL056	Against new proposals for additional dwellings.	Number of dwellings on He3 should be limited to 11 executive type houses.
BL061	How can we be assured once a few houses have been built around The Grange/The Spinney, more won't follow?	All plans for building to be removed
BL061	Can we be assured that social housing won't be built in the area and lower property values?	All plans for building to be removed
BL107iv	Concerned that the number of dwellings has increased and that the positioning of new houses will result in a loss of privacy.	Site should be limited in numbers and carefully planned to retain high standard of amenity for dwellings on the Spinney. Support dwellings, individually designed in own grounds.

BL109v	Southern part of HE3 seems suitable for development provided not too close to A66/Grange Road.	Develop southern part of HE3 sensitively - low level properties at <12dw/ha. Green space within the area and access to Blackwell village's heart. A pond for residents and wildlife would be welcome.
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The masterplan approach allows the development of sites to be considered comprehensively, and as a result, it follows that there would be no intention of future incremental development on the remaining parkland.</p> <p>Issues such as impact on amenity and privacy and house types will be considered in detail as part of the planning application process, along with other development management considerations, such as impact on trees, etc.</p>		

HE3 – Heritage		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes

BL090; BL162	Concern regarding the likely adverse impact on the Grade II* Heritage asset, particularly DBC's response to Archaeo Environment's 2012 report and DBC's subsequent discussions with Historic England regarding the significance of the site, including the application made by a local resident for the site to be protected as a national heritage asset and the potential for an access to go through the site's historic boundary walls	Further consideration should be given to the impact of building on the Historic Parkland. Council should remove HE3 and undertake works to improve the area (drainage and tree planting). Pedestrian access to Mill Lane should be restored. No vehicular access between Grangeside and the Spinney. Land should be transferred to a Community Land Trust with an endowed fund to create an income for maintenance. Existing building (green keeper's compound) could become low density mews development.
BL0096; BL0097;	The site is a sensitive site and should be retained as historic parkland. If any development takes place we will have lost the opportunity to save this parkland for future generations.	
BL109v; BL162	Northern part of HE3 was within original landscaped estate of Blackwell Grange. Object to its development due to the loss of heritage asset for the town.	Do not build houses in the northern part of HE3
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>The former parkland, has since 1971 until relatively recently been in use as a golf course. The parkland does not meet Historic England's criteria to be registered as a Historic Park and Garden as a result of the changes that have taken place on the site over the years. There are plans to enhance the former parkland and create a local nature reserve, funded by development on the site.</p> <p>The site is part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building, however this does not mean that no change or even no harmful change can take place. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework allows for less than substantial harm, providing there are public benefits. We have received advice from Historic England that the allocation of the site for relatively low density, top-end executive housing would constitute less than substantial harm. Impact upon the listed building has been assessed and has been guided by advice from Historic England. Their advice gave us a steer that the site has some more development potential than the Archaeo-Environment Report of 2012 advises. Historic England will also advise on any future planning applications for development on the site. Historic England (formerly English Heritage) have been consulted and their response can be viewed online (Ref No. BL79).</p>		

It is acknowledged that the Blackwell area of Darlington has some historic and traditional buildings and is made up of high quality suburbs. Any new development on the Blackwell Grange site should to be guided by Darlington’s high quality suburbs, including Blackwell and the West End.

A Parkland Restoration Plan would form part of any planning application.

HE3 - Trees		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL047	Can you confirm the existing trees on Blackwell Lane and Carmel Road South would be preserved to screen new homes? We assume that trees marked orange on the enclosed map would be preserved in any construction (please see consultation response for attached plan)	
BL107v	The treed area to the rear of the Spinney should be maintained as trees to provide a buffer between dwellings.	Amend plans accordingly
BL074	Concern about loss of mature trees the access road will result in	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>It is recognised that the existing trees are a very important element of the area and the vast majority will be retained. Any planning application for residential development will be assessed on that basis, together with all other planning considerations. The majority of the protected trees are located on the borders of the parkland and these will remain. However Tree Preservation Orders are not intended to prevent felling forever. There are circumstances where felling a protected tree is acceptable, e.g. dead or dying trees in danger or falling down. However any planning permission given would override any existing TPO’s if their retention was incompatible with the permission granted. The TPO legislation does not limit planning, but is considered in detail when looking any planning applications – and if removal of a tree is considered acceptable in the balance of the situation, authorisation can be given. However, there are a great many trees within the site that will not be subject to TPO’s but are still high value trees. When assessing the trees generally on site, extra consideration is not given to TPO’d trees per se, but every tree is assessed with regards its retention value both presently and in the future within a potentially different surrounding. Every tree from 6cm stem diameter and up is considered as a material consideration and all trees retained must be offered the same minimum protection as recommended by the British Standards. The number of trees to be felled would be kept to a minimum and remaining trees, including their root systems, will be protected during construction. It is illegal to cut down, top, lop, uproot, cut roots, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a protected tree without the Local Planning Authority’s written consent.</p>		

HE3 - Access		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL036	Two exits onto Carmel Road will cause chaos - already queues at peak times	
BL014; BL047	Blackwell Lane Access very poor. Narrow and poor visibility with parked cars; Concern over the possible entrance opposite 128 Blackwell Lane too near to the existing access to Grangeside, were advised this access point would only be used as a last resort.	
BL032; BL074	Access/egress onto Carmel Road South will be dangerous.	
BL054	Strip of land with mature trees and bushes between Grangeside and The Spinney is a pleasant area of greenery. As this is fenced off from Golf Course land it cannot be considered part of the 'former golf course'. Making this an entry point is a lazy option for a developer/planner to suggest. Passes too close to two properties.	An alternative feasibility access should be used.
BL056; BL074; BL107iii; BL156; BL163	Against proposed access to He3 via the Spinney or directly from Carmel Road South. This road is already dangerous and very busy. Exiting The Spinney is difficult due to poor visibility caused by existing trees to the right.	Access to He3 should come from the existing access to the rear of the Hotel, off Blackwell Lane rather than off Carmel Road South. BL107iii - access closer to Blands Corner would be more accessible
BL109v; BL156	Would prefer not to have access between The Spinney and Grange Road, although this could be a pedestrian/cycle link. A road access would require the removal of some very old trees.	
BL117; BL156	A through route from Blackwell Lane to Carmel Rd South will create a through route at peak times which will detract from the executive nature of development	Access from Carmel Rd South via The Spinney should be abandoned to prevent through traffic and improve the environment and traffic noise for the new homes. Access from Mill Lane/Blackwell Lane should also be abandoned.

BL160	Can the Council confirm yet whether the woodland walk pathway that runs between the proposed development and Blackwell Lane will remain for public use and with all the current trees and brick wall maintained? The trees there will not only continue to provide a wildlife habitat but an important screening function.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>Following the consultation, the preferred access is directly off Carmel Road South through an existing access and across a Council owned depot (currently used for the storage of wheelie bins). The access point is currently within the 60mph speed limit. Therefore, any future access to a housing development would require the 30mph speed limit being extended to cover the new access point for highway safety reasons. Visibility to the south from this access is suitable for a 30mph limit. However, to the north, visibility is restricted by vegetation and would require the removal of some mature trees.</p> <p>There will be no through route created from Blackwell Lane to Carmel Road South.</p> <p>The specific details of any development would be addressed as part of the planning application process.</p>		

HE3 - Highways		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL069; BL073	Traffic impact on Blackwell - The new housing developments He4 (Option 1 and Option 2) and He3 will result in increased traffic congestion not only along Carmel Road North but also along Blackwell as cars seek to avoid delay by using this route to access the A66/Carmel Road. This is already a problem with cars using the road as a rat-run, not just at peak times but increasingly in the early morning and at night. This road is a residential area and has a cycle route – it is not an extension of the A66, or a short-cut to Carmel Road.	Traffic calming measures such as a chicane, and/or other methods should be introduced. Rigorous enforcement of the 30mph speed limit and size restrictions which are currently flouted should be introduced as a priority.
BL0096; BL0097	Would increase traffic flow and that in turn would result in parking issues, additional noise and cause added stress to residents.	

BL160	Major concerns remain (safety and noise) in terms of revised 'preferred access points' in development. Proposed access points four and five are located on or just before / after bends on Blackwell Lane which, when taking into account the current speed and level of traffic on the road (as a cut through from Grange Road especially in the peak times / school run) is of great concern (and seemingly poor planning). I missed any mention of any proposed traffic calming measures though a greater number of dwellings on all sites will mean greater traffic onto Blackwell Lane. If this goes ahead, an access point with a roundabout at the junction of Hartford Road and Blackwell Lane seems more appropriate.	Removal of proposed access points four and five as they are located on or just before / after bends on Blackwell Lane which, when taking into account the current speed and level of traffic on the road (as a cut through from Grange Road especially in peak times / school run) is of great concern. Addition of access point onto Grange Road - the largest access point to the hotel. Inclusion of traffic calming measures.
BL160	There is poor public transport and social infrastructure on all proposed sites. Blackwell Lane is not a bus route, there are no doctor surgeries, pharmacies, and cafes - the types of services older and typically less mobile people will want to use. I also fail to see how the targeted demographic for these apartments will walk across the parkland, past the hotel, etc. to get to a bus stop. It is not feasible to assume that this demographic will either own or be able to drive a car. The site is just as unfeasible as the Council believed Stressholme to be for development.	
BL163	Traffic to the A1 is already an issue - Darlington does not have the highway infrastructure to support the additional volume of traffic.	
BL163	Carmel Road South is busy and popular with cyclists - there are issues with the narrowness of the road, volume of traffic and visibility issues caused by trees.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>A Transport Assessment is currently being produced in consultation with Highways England that will demonstrate the impact of the proposals on the local and strategic highway and this will help to inform the density of building on site. As part of the assessment accident statistics are reviewed and taken into consideration. This will also include a Travel plan that will assess the needs of non-motorised users. Bridge Road and the A66 is owned and maintained by Highways England. There are proposals to improve Blands Corner roundabout which Highways England are reviewing. Off-site highway improvements to mitigate the development traffic would be highlighted as required within the Transport Assessment.</p> <p>Any proposed access point into the site would comply with current design guidance including adequate visibility splays for the speed of the road and</p>		

have been positioned accordingly.

Proposed junctions on Carmel Road South would incorporate localised widening of the carriageway in order to create a ghost island T junction to help prevent the blocking of mainline traffic by right turning traffic into the sites. Junction assessments will be carried out to ensure the new junctions have sufficient capacity to meet the development need. Mini roundabouts would be an unsuitable form of junction on Carmel Road to access this development.

Traffic regulation orders in the form of double yellow lines are proposed along significant lengths of Grange Road, Carmel Road South, Croft Road and Snipe Lane as part of the DFC planning permission to help regulate parking associated with match days.

A construction management plan would be a condition of any granted permission and would control construction routes to site.

The highways are routinely inspected for defects and remedial action taken where necessary.

Car parking to serve the development need would be in line with the Residential Design Guide and Specification for the Tees Valley and would be appropriate to the dwelling size and type proposed.

HE3 – Amenity and Open Space		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL074; BL145	Object to high density plan of new housing to the rear of the Spinney. This development will overlook our house on two sides. The proposed five properties bordering onto our property will result in us being boxed in, our living areas will be constantly overlooked. Unlike neighbours these rooms face south resulting in significant loss of privacy.	
BL047	Would suggest that some proceeds from sale are earmarked to improve wooded areas on Blackwell Lane and Carmel Road South.	

BL090; BL145	Concern regarding the effect on the character of the neighbourhood, visual impact, overlooking and loss of privacy - particularly with reference to the setting of the listed building (references correspondence with Historic England). Concerns regarding design and layout of new dwellings, specifically the greater density and proximity to existing properties. Considers the enjoyment of a view part of residential amenity.	Further consideration should be given to the impact of building on the Historic Parkland and Blackwell Grange. Council should remove HE1 and undertake works to improve the area (drainage and tree planting). Land should be transferred to a Community Land Trust with an endowed fund to create an income for maintenance. Existing building (green keeper's compound) could become low density mews development.
BL082; BL083; BL084	He3 parkland is an asset which should be kept for the enjoyment of future generations.	
BL0096; BL0097; BL127iv;	Existing residents would lose their privacy by being overlooked by any development; Loss of light.	
BL096; BL0097	Development would result in more street lighting that would increase more light pollution in the area.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>All of the statutory consultees who responded accepted the principle of residential development providing the impact of the development is minimised and mitigated.</p> <p>Although the proposal would involve loss of some open space, it retains the majority of it, and would result in improvements to the remainder of the open space.</p> <p>Detailed comments and suggestions regarding the development will be taken into account in the detailed design of any development, and residents will have the opportunity to engage in this through the planning application process.</p>		

HE3 – Drainage and Flooding		
Consultee Ref	Summary of Comments	Respondents suggested changes
BL080; BL083; BL109v; BL101xiv; BL151	Most people were concerned about the pooling of water into their back gardens, especially on Grangeside, and seemed sceptical that the new development would solve the problem. BL080 - Photos previously sent in. Removal of trees would make situation worse. Layer of clay under the topsoil. BL109v - detail regarding serpentine lake and existing drainage channels under the former golf course.	BL080 - Replanting of trees to the rear of Grangeside. Lake planned in the nineteenth century should be constructed and linked to the Victorian culvert to the rear of 17 Grangeside. Either way an open area should be left behind Grangeside.
BL080	I will hold the Council legally responsible if the flooding increases as a result of any development and is a problem to our property.	
<p>Officer comments</p> <p>Environment Agency information shows that there is no flood risk affecting any of the development sites. However there is some land that experiences surface water drainage problems. This is not a constraint to development, as maintaining green field rates of surface water run-off would be dealt with through the planning application process by way of detailed planning conditions. There is also a strong probability that residential development would actually resolve the drainage problems as this would have an impact on the saleability of the new housing.</p> <p>The Drainage Study demonstrates that there are several drainage solutions, including the opportunity to incorporate a sustainable drainage scheme within the remaining parkland; the latter would have the added benefit of providing the additional habitat for the great crested news and other species. Therefore drainage is not an insurmountable problem and could actually be improved for existing residents through the new development.</p>		