

**DARLINGTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ACCOMMODATING  
GROWTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT, ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Economy Portfolio  
Responsible Director - Richard Alty (Assistant Chief Executive, Regeneration)**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report outlines the contents of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document (DPD) Issues and Options Report attached to this report as **Appendix 1**. It seeks Cabinet's approval of the document as the basis for consultation.

**Summary**

2. The Accommodating Growth DPD is essentially a site allocations document that deals with new development and growth and must be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The Issues and Options Report is the first formal stage of preparation and it is intended that public and other consultations on the document will take place in mid November through to January, to include consultation events and Members Briefings. It is the first time that people will be able to see, as lines on maps, exactly where the options for the new development are that will be needed to deliver the LDF Core Strategy; as such, it is considered likely to generate significant local community interest.
3. In the preparation of the document, engagement has taken place between key officers in the Council and members of the LDF Officer Working Group. The next stage of production of the DPD will be the Preferred Options stage, programmed for July 2011.
4. The Accommodating Growth Issues and Options report is structured around the themes of the Core Strategy that relate directly to the allocation of land for new development, with the addition of a new chapter dealing with mixed-use development, as follows:
  - (a) Employment (Prosperous Darlington);
  - (b) Mixed-use sites;
  - (c) Housing (Quality Housing for All);
  - (d) Gypsies and Travellers (Quality Housing for All) and,
  - (e) Green Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation (A Healthy and Safe Darlington).
2. For each issue identified, where relevant, a series of options are set out, with brief details of the likely outcome of those options, and key questions for respondents to consider that would assist in the development of policy. Where sites are identified, they are primarily

sourced from supporting background studies for the Core Strategy. For example, the employment chapter bases options around the recommendations set out in the Darlington Employment Land Review, and the Green Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation chapter, puts forward potential sites from the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Playing Pitch Strategy, the Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## **Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that: -
  - (a) The contents of the Darlington Local Development Framework: Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document, Issues and Options Report, be agreed.
  - (b) The Darlington Local Development Framework: Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document Issues and Options Report form the basis for carrying out public and other consultations, in line with regulatory requirements and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
  - (c) The Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration), in consultation with the Economy Portfolio Holder, be authorized to agree the text to be inserted into the 'What the SA says' boxes within the main document before it goes out to consultation.
  - (d) The Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration), in consultation with the Economy Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any minor changes to the wording prior to finalising the Local Development Framework: Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document, Issues and Options Report for consultation.

## **Reasons**

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) To continue to progress towards fulfilling the statutory requirements to have an up to date Local Development Framework in place.
  - (b) To avoid unnecessary delays in the remaining stages of LDF Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document preparation.
  - (c) To fulfil the regulatory requirements of Local Development Framework document preparation.

**Richard Alty**  
**Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

## **Background Papers**

Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Publication Draft, August 2010  
Darlington Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Draft Publication, July 2010  
Core Strategy Strategic Housing Locations Options Appraisal, June 2010  
Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2009  
Darlington Housing Implementation Strategy, June 2010

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Darlington Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, March 2009 and Update 1, Autumn 2009  
 Design of New Development Supplementary Planning Document, 2009  
 Economic Viability of Housing Land in Darlington Borough, Levvel, July 2010  
 Darlington LDF Transport Area Action Plans, ARUP, August 2010  
 Darlington Employment Land Review, 2009  
 Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (January 2009)  
 Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show people sites – regional analysis, Association of North East Councils, July 2010  
 One Darlington: Perfectly Placed: Darlington Partnership, 2008  
 Darlington Open Spaces Strategy, 2007  
 Draft Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2010  
 Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy, 2009  
 Darlington Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy, 2009  
 Darlington Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2007  
 Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy, Tees Valley JSU, 2008

Emma Williams: Extension 2639

S17 Crime and Disorder	The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.
Health and Well Being	The work on the Issues and Options report must be in conformity to the Core Strategy, and deals with allocations in respect of Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation, New Housing Development, Meeting Housing Needs, Existing Housing, Accommodating Travelling Groups which will all contribute to better health and well being of residents of Darlington.
Sustainability	A Sustainability Appraisal has informed the preparation of the Core Strategy, on which this document is based. The Accommodating Growth DPD has been subject to sustainability appraisal to inform policy development.
Diversity	An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the Accommodating Growth Issues and Options report. A Disabilities Impact Assessment is to take place during the consultation period of the document.
Wards Affected	All.
Groups Affected	All.
Budget and Policy Framework	The LDF is part of the Council's Policy Framework, which will be updated at the end of the process; this report, however, deals only with the next consultation stage of the process. There is no change to the budget.
Key Decision	No.
Urgent Decision	No.

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Accommodating Growth DPD is part of the Local Development Framework, which is the spatial expression of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	This report does not reflect any efficiency savings

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

3. The Accommodating Growth DPD will be an important document in the Local Development Framework, providing detail to those policies within the Core Strategy that relate to new development and growth. The document will allocate land for specific uses that will be shown on an accompanying proposals map.
4. As it will sit under the main strategic policy of the Core Strategy, it will therefore be linked closely to the themes of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and will reflect other Council strategies that have implications for the development and use of land, such as the Open Spaces Strategy and the Housing Implementation Strategy, together with national policy.
5. The Issues and Options stage is the first formal stage in the preparation of the DPD. Its purpose is to stimulate debate by identifying the key issues and setting out a range of options to deliver the objectives of the Core Strategy. It is the first time that people will be able to see, as lines on maps, exactly where the options for the new development are that will be needed to deliver the LDF Core Strategy; as such, it is considered likely to generate significant local community interest. Subject to Cabinet approval, the Issues and Options report will be subject to consultation from mid November through to January, and feedback from this consultation, together with further work, will assist in the preparation of the Preferred Options, which is currently programmed for July 2011.

### Main topics of the Accommodating Growth DPD Issues and Options Report

6. The Issues and Options Report is set out in order of the themes of the Core Strategy, with the exception of mixed-use sites, which cuts across a number of the policies in the strategy. An outline of how it is proposed each topic will be dealt with is considered below.

### Economy and Employment

7. Employment land to meet the needs of future economic development to 2026 must be identified and allocated. Allocated sites should be in locations that are compatible with any other existing and proposed neighbouring uses. Up to 235ha of general employment land is required, with a further 125ha in the Key Employment Locations of Faverdale and Heighington Lane, already identified as strategic locations in the Core Strategy (Policy CS5).
8. The Issues and Options relating to employment land provision are based around the recommendations set out in the Darlington Employment Land Review, 2009. The sites proposed as allocations are generally vacant sites within, and close to, existing employment areas such as the Faverdale and Yarm Road, central areas such as Cleveland Street and Albert Hill, and airport-related and general employment land at Durham Tees Valley Airport. Also included in this list are larger vacant sites such as the Yarm Road North extension to the south of the Eastern Transport Corridor, McMullen Road West and Yarm Road South (land to the west of the Morton Palms Business Park development). The Key Employment Locations of Faverdale and Heighington Lane are already identified in the Core Strategy as Strategic Employment locations however the specific site boundaries of

these areas will be addressed through this document (See Chapter four of the main document and associated maps).

9. The first option would allocate only sites identified in the Employment Land Review. The other option would allocate those sites, together with any other suitable sites that are suggested through the consultation. This could result in consideration of land that has not previously been considered by the Council, but may be suitable for employment uses.
10. In order to ensure that there will be sufficient range and choice of suitable land for each of the different employment types that may wish to expand, relocate within, or relocate to the Borough, a further set of options is proposed. These are based around the recommendations of the Employment Land Review, relating to the employment uses that would be acceptable on each of the sites identified. It is anticipated that such options would stimulate debate about whether there are any other suggested uses for the sites identified, taking into account the land-take of the use and the nature of the site in question.

### **Mixed Use Sites**

11. The Core Strategy identifies various locations where development could include a mix of housing, employment, retail and leisure uses existing alongside each other. The mixed-use development chapter of the Issues and Options Report considers the option for accommodating mixed-use development within the town centre fringe, Feethams area, Central Park, Lingfield Point, together with the existing employment area of Blackett Road. Another option is proposed, which includes any other suitable sites for mixed-use development, that may be suggested through the consultation and that may not have previously been considered by the Council (see Chapter five of the main document and associated maps).
12. A number of options are also set out around how much and what uses should be allowed on each of the identified sites (including any new sites identified through the consultation).

### **Housing**

13. Over the 15 years to 2026 about 5,800 new homes will be required in the Borough. Of these, planning permissions have already been granted for about 3,300 leaving about 2,500 for which new land needs to be identified and allocated. Existing planning permissions are expected to deliver the majority of new housing required up to 2016, so new housing land allocations are unlikely to be developed until 2016 at the earliest, unless a lot of the houses already with planning permission are not actually built.
14. One set of options would allocate sites within the Main Urban Area identified as suitable, available and deliverable for new housing in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009 (SHLAA). These include a range of sites in terms of sizes, land type and ownerships that may be required from 2016-2021, or from 2021-2026. Any additional sites would come forward through feedback from this consultation.
15. The Town Centre Fringe area is also planned to accommodate significant new housing development. Because work is still underway to develop the overall master plan for this area, it is not appropriate to identify options for housing land allocations at this stage. However, it is proposed to seek views on the ideas for the mix of uses that could take place in a series of zones throughout the fringe, becoming progressively more residential further from the town centre, more commercial closer to the town centre and with a high proportion

of green space to mitigate flood risk in the areas adjacent to the River Skerne in the Valley Street/John Street areas. Consultations on options for specific sites for housing would take place as part of fringe area consultations next spring.

16. Three options are presented for providing new housing land at the North West Urban Fringe. This land is unlikely to be required for new housing until at least 2016 (see Figure 2.3 of Chapter six of the main document).
  1. Developing an area of land at Stag House Farm and an area to the east of Newton Lane / West of Edward Pease Way; or
  2. Developing the area to the east of Newton Lane / West of Edward Pease Way; or
  3. Developing an area of land to the north of Rotary Way and West of Edward Pease Way.
17. The areas would have to be developed so that in combination, they provided not only the housing but also all the supporting infrastructure to create a new neighbourhood, e.g. bus services, new roads, green space and play areas, primary school, nursery, pub, shops.
18. Three options are set out for new housing development at the Eastern Urban Fringe, required from 2021 at the earliest (see Figure 2.4 of Chapter six of the main document):
  1. Developing an area to the north of Coombe Drive (Red Hall) and extending east; or
  2. Developing an area with frontage onto the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor (DETC) but extending north; or
  3. Developing an area extending the length of the DETC frontage.
19. The first option would ideally include a link into Coombe Drive and the wider Red Hall estate, to allow access for bus services, and to shops and services for residents, until such time as there is sufficient housing to support their provision within the new neighbourhood. The second and third options envisage access to schools, shops and services being via the DETC initially, with links to Red Hall being at a later stage. Development in this location would only amount to 150 dwellings before 2026, but would be part of a larger neighbourhood that would be implemented beyond 2026.

### **Existing Housing**

20. The Core Strategy identified potential housing improvement areas but because of continuing significant uncertainty about how much and when public funding will be available to support improvement works, it is not proposed to identify specific public or private sector housing areas for investment at this stage. To do so could raise unrealistic expectations of early intervention amongst people living in the identified areas, or could lead to blight and anxiety over the medium to long term in the affected neighbourhoods. If any areas can be identified, this will need to be done by about mid 2011, so that it can be fed into the Preferred Options document. There are unlikely to be options to consult on, as decisions about which areas to identify should be based on housing condition and housing needs evidence.

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

21. The Accommodating Growth DPD must allocate new sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet existing unmet need and the needs that are forecast to occur over the plan period.

This will require a decision on the number of residential pitches to be made. Work was carried out in 2009 on a Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (TVGTAA). This established the need across the study area, for additional permanent residential pitches and transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers and sites for Travelling Show people. The work was carried out using a ‘needs where it is seen to arise’ methodology, resulting in the highest need being identified in the areas with the highest existing provision, i.e. Darlington Borough.

22. The recommended provision for permanent residential pitches, over the study area, is set out in Table 1 (below), but the study also included a recommendation that the Tees Valley Authorities work together to come up with a fair and equitable form of apportionment across the study area. Since the study was completed, there has been little will from any of the other Tees Valley Authorities to approach apportionment in this way and all are at a fairly advanced stage in the preparation of their DPDs, with the exception of Stockton.

**Table 1: Residential accommodation needs arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show people populations**

	Study Total Area	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton on Tees
Current authorised residential provision (pitches)	128	62	0	25	0	41
<b>Additional Residential need 2007-2012 (pitches)</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>17</b>
Additional Residential need 2012-2016 (pitches)	26	15	1	3	1	7
Additional Residential need 2016-2021 (pitches)	38	22	1	4	2	10
Estimated total additional residential pitch need 2007-2021	142	98	6	11	-4	34

23. The Accommodating Growth DPD will provide for an identified need to be established through the Issues and Options consultation. In Table 1, it shows that the need identified in Darlington is 61 residential pitches until 2012. However, as described above, this is based on the historical form of apportionment across the study area, and reflects the current uneven distribution of pitches. In reality, it is unlikely that the number of pitches proposed in Darlington, could be achieved, and if this need was achieved it is likely that some pitches would be occupied by those whose needs were not identified in the Tees Valley. Also, and perhaps more importantly, the study does indicate that further work should be done to achieve an equitable and sustainable apportionment of the overall number.
24. The Issues and Options Report includes the following options to establish a deliverable and sustainable number of pitches, to be translated into sites:
- Option A: Calculate the need for permanent residential pitches based on an equal split of the total identified need (of 142 pitches) across the Tees Valley between 2007-2021, for each local authority, resulting in a total requirement for the provision of 26 additional pitches to 2021 (taking into account a recent planning permission for the provision of two pitches);
  - Option B: Calculate the need for permanent residential pitches based on an equal split of the identified short term needs between 2007-2012 only, and calculate the remainder

of the need through local knowledge and evidence, resulting in a short term need of 14 pitches (taking into account a recent planning permission for the provision of two pitches) with the remainder of any need to be established through this consultation.

25. Both options are considered to achieve a deliverable and sustainable target, much in line with more recent local knowledge of supply and demand. It is proposed that the consultation will invite responses based on a set of questions asking if need has been correctly identified and whether there are other options, that have not been previously considered by the Council.
26. It is also proposed to seek to establish whether there is an unmet need for a site for Travelling Show People and a transit or short stay site for gypsies and travellers. If so, what form these should take and whether there are any specific issues people feel we should be taking into account in the site selection / assessment process. It is not proposed to put forward any new sites as part of the Issues and Options consultation, however suggestions will be sought through this consultation, of sites that may be suitable for providing for the above unmet needs.

### **Green Infrastructure and Sports and Recreation**

27. The document considers the key issues of how playing pitch provision, sports facilities and the remainder of the green infrastructure network should be protected and enhanced by identifying land for new sites, based on the hierarchy of provision set out in the Core Strategy. It is proposed that the options for identifying green infrastructure sites are based on sites identified by the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Playing Pitch Strategy, the Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Any new sites suggested, as part of the consultation would then be considered in the preparation of the Preferred options.

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment**

28. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be published alongside the Issues and Options paper and will be made available for comment during the consultation period. SA and HRA are statutory requirements. The SA considers the social, economic and environmental effects of the options whilst the HRA will consider their impact on European designated nature sites (outside the Borough). Summaries of the SA findings will be integrated into the Issues and Options Report and will inform decisions as to which options to take forward as the Council's Preferred Options in due course.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment and Disabilities Equalities Impact Assessment**

29. A generic Equalities Impact Assessment (EQA) has been carried out and its results will inform the consultation process. The Assessment identifies specific groups, included in the consultation on the stages of the LDF Core Strategy already carried out, and broadly identifies the consultation targets and techniques that will be required to enable effective feedback on this Issues and Options document from all members of communities. The work also identifies the specific nature of some consultation and feedback sought, such as liaising with the Gypsy and Traveller Community and people from different age groups. In addition, a Disabilities Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out during the proposed consultation exercise, with the involvement of the people likely to be most affected, and this work will help inform the preparation of the Preferred Options.

## **Next Steps**

30. Subject to Cabinet's agreement, the documents will be subject to consultation from mid November through to January, and feedback from this consultation, together with further work, will assist in the preparation of the Preferred Options programmed for July 2011.