

Darlington Local Development Framework

Core Strategy: Preferred Options - Draft Core Strategy Policies

Theme 1. Key Sustainability Themes

Developing and sustaining a stronger and more diverse local economy
Strengthening communities, reducing inequalities and improving quality of life
Effective protection of the environment

Theme 2. Draft Development Strategy

Sustainable growth to benefit the Borough and surrounding area
Making the most of Darlington's compact development pattern
Paying for the costs associated with development

Theme 3. Draft Housing

Housing for all
Providing the right housing in the right place at the right time
Making the most of the existing building stock

Theme 4. Draft Business, Industry and Employment

New business, industrial and employment development
Existing business, industrial and employment development

Theme 5. Draft Environmental Resources

Conserving environmental value
Sustainable energy management
Reducing the environmental and human health risks of new development

Theme 6. Draft Spaces and Places

Comprehensive network of open spaces
Playing pitches
Poor and degraded landscapes and townscapes
High quality, distinctive design
Existing environmental assets

Theme 7. Draft The Town Centre

Promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre

Theme 8. Draft Transport and Accessibility

Accessibility for all
Access to local facilities
Transport infrastructure

Theme 1: Key Sustainability Themes

CP1.1: Developing and Sustaining a Stronger and More Diverse Local Economy.

This policy will seek to realise the potential of the Borough’s strategic location, good transport links, attractive physical environment and sustainable development pattern to:

- attract development which would not otherwise come to the region
- retain and support economic activity which would otherwise be lost to the area
- encourage people to visit the Borough and the surrounding area for business, leisure, recreation, shopping, tourism and work

in conjunction with strengthening economic linkages, and reducing economic inequalities, within the Borough, and between the Borough and surrounding area.

It will do this by:

- a) providing for new development in a wide range of easily accessed locations, mainly within and adjacent to the town, suitable for a wide range of new business, industrial and related development, and make provision for bringing them forward for development
- b) supporting new development elsewhere across the Borough, in the town, villages and countryside,
- c) supporting the development and expansion of existing business, industry and related activity
- d) supporting development in locations which offer the potential for making better use of underutilised labour and skills e.g. areas of disadvantage, people with domestic ties, people with impaired mobility
- e) providing for development which will safeguard the vitality and viability of the town centre and surrounding area
- f) providing for the further development of other major visitor attractions, and supporting the development of new visitor attractions
- g) supporting development which will help sustain a viable countryside
- h) providing for infrastructure improvements which will encourage business investment e.g. education, physical gateways, transport

1.1 What it is about

Whilst the Darlington economy has several strengths, it also has a number of weaknesses including, relative to the national position, low incomes, low business birth rate, high proportion of low-skill service jobs, heavy dependence on large employers, and high unemployment in some age groups and disadvantaged groups and areas. The Community Strategy seeks increased levels of employment, higher wage levels, growth in business start-ups and more investment retained in the local economy as key strategic outcomes. The Economic Regeneration Strategy seeks their achievement through, amongst other aims, the creation of a quality environment for economic growth (Theme 4) and the promotion of Darlington as a quality location for business and tourism (Theme 5).

1.2 Why it is important

A broader economic base, with good growth sector representation, is likely to result in better, and longer-term, employment opportunities for local people. There is scope for realising more of the Borough’s untapped development potential, taking care not to jeopardise the attributes that contribute towards it.

1.3 The nature of the policy approach

The policy approach will address the aims of, and strategic outcomes sought by the Community Strategy, and the relevant Economic Regeneration Strategy aims and objectives, by a combination of identifying locations likely to attract new development, setting out criteria favourable to the consideration of development proposals there and elsewhere. It will support the implementation of 'key drivers'.

1.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy draws together a number of Local Plan policy themes in a more co-ordinated way, and takes a more pro-active approach towards implementation. It addresses economic inequalities and prioritisation of development for the first time.

1.5 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Criteria for redevelopment and site selection for new development will be set out in the Development Policies document. Any new allocations will appear in possible future allocations DPD.

CP1.2: Strengthening Communities, Reducing Inequalities and Improving Quality of Life

Under this policy new and improved open spaces, learning and leisure facilities and other public services to be provided and located to help achieve equality of access for all. Particular attention will be paid to the levels of provision in the priority wards, and to addressing the needs of young people and older people, wherever they may live.

Where community facilities or spaces in the Priority Wards fall into under-use or mis-use, the Council will support initiatives to improve the safety or perception of safety of the site by actively promoting their improvement for the intended use or for an alternative use.

Deprivation: the priority wards are identified with reference to Government statistics that measure things such as levels of income, educational attainment, incidence of crime, unemployment and health.

The 11 priority wards in the Neighbourhood renewal Strategy are currently Bank Top, Central, Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Houghton East, Lascelles, Lingfield, Northgate, North Road and Park East.

1.6 What it is about

Some areas of the Borough suffer from deprivation arising from, amongst other things, a lack of access to public facilities and services. The life chances and aspirations of people in these areas can be seriously affected by this shortfall. Further problems can arise with neglected and run-down buildings and spaces, which give the impression of a lack of care and provide opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

1.7 Why it is important

Wherever people live within the Borough, they are entitled to enjoy similar levels of service provision and environmental quality.

1.8 The nature of the policy approach

The Community Strategy seeks to focus action on the priority wards identified in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS), as well as older people and young people, and this policy reflects that. The maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, the provision of new facilities and open spaces, where appropriate, and the redevelopment of open spaces for which there is no identified need will all help to support efforts to renew community pride, build a stronger neighbourhoods and improve their image. At the heart of all this work will be community involvement, according to the principles set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI).

1.9 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

This is a new policy that reflects the priorities identified in the Community Strategy and the Government's wish that local authorities help build strong communities.

1.10 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Criteria for redevelopment and site selection for new development will be set out in the Development Policies document. Any new allocations will appear in possible future allocations document.

CP1.3: Effective Protection of the Environment

This policy will have 4 strands:

- a) *Local environment*: a hierarchy of protection, with the greatest protection being afforded to sites, buildings or features of national or international importance, and the lowest to those of local significance.
- b) *Local resource management*: maintaining and improving air and water quality.
- c) *Global environment*: a proactive statement requiring an approach to the design and layout of all new development that incorporates measures to reduce the overall carbon emissions that arise from the manufacture of construction materials, the capacity of the development to capture and retain energy from renewable and conventional sources, and the way journeys are made to and from the site.
- d) *Balancing sometimes conflicting environmental, social and economic objectives*: a clear statement that schemes should bring environmental, economic and social benefits concurrently and how conflicts will be resolved.

Greenhouse gas emissions: mainly carbon dioxide and to a lesser extent, nitrogen dioxide.

1.11 What it is about

The need to protect the environment is a growing concern. In order to be effective, approaches must be taken at all levels, from global to local. The need for more sustainable development is supported locally whilst International agreements, European directives, national legislation and policy also make this compulsory.

1.12 Why it is important

Too often, the most valuable environmental resources have been insufficiently protected, and development decisions have resulted in the loss of locally important environmental features. The effect of new development on the local environment is an established planning consideration, but the need for wider environmental impact of new development, such as climate change is now emerging as a major consideration when considering development proposals.

1.13 The nature of the policy approach

This policy therefore will indicate clearly the importance that is afforded to protection of the various aspects of the environment, when compared to other social and economic objectives.

Historic buildings, conservation areas, nature conservation sites, open spaces, protected trees, ancient woodlands and sites of archaeological interest are the kinds of environmental resources referred to in strand (i) of the preferred option above. The protection afforded to them should be in proportion to the spatial scale at which they are considered important or worthy of protection.

Given the high level of carbon emissions directly and indirectly from associated with buildings*, it is important that new environmental standards for development are set, to help moderate the Borough's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. Using recycled construction materials, designing-in of elements such as solar panels and orientating buildings to maximise exposure to sunlight can all help to reduce the amount of energy needed to build and subsequently occupy developments, whilst good walking, cycling and public transport access can help to reduce traffic generation and vehicle emissions arising from the use of the development.

Environmental concerns may take precedence when conflict between environmental, social and economic goals is unavoidable. One of the key goals of the Community Strategy is improving the local economy, and to achieve this, economic objectives may, in certain circumstances, have to override other objectives. An example could be where a new development will bring employment that is of a scale whose benefits are felt beyond the Borough, and where the environmental resources are of less than sub-regional importance; if the latter are of equivalent or greater importance, schemes should include for their conservation.

1.14 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

This policy builds on the Local Plan and gives much stronger expression and priority to the whole sustainable development agenda. It gives a clear indication as to where the balance between economic, social and environmental objectives lies, where these appear to be in conflict.

1.15 How the Policy will be Developed in the LDF

More detailed aspects will be covered in Theme 5, environmental resources and Theme 6, spaces and places of the preferred options report. Development and site selection criteria will be set out in the Development Policies document.

Theme 2: Development Strategy

CP 2.1: Sustainable Growth to Benefit the Borough and the Surrounding Area

This policy will build on the Borough’s strategic location by:

- a) strengthening its function as a sub-regional centre and gateway to the North-East; and
- b) strengthening its links with surrounding parts of south and west County Durham and North Yorkshire/Teess Valley City Region for the benefit of the wider area.

It will provide for an increasingly diverse and modestly growing population and seek to enhance the Borough’s attributes as a place in which to live, move, work and relax in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way, through:

- c) development of new housing and improvement of existing housing to meet existing and new residents needs and aspirations; in step with
- d) provision for business, industrial and service growth to strengthen the local economy, thereby generating more quality employment; complemented by
- e) development of the Borough’s cultural, retail, service and tourism functions (also strengthening the local economy); all supported by
- f) enhancement of its spaces and places; and underpinned by
- g) improvements to its transport and other physical infrastructure

2.1 What it is about

This issue concerns the fundamental direction Darlington will take to create an attractive environment to live and invest through planning policy. This forms the starting point of a development strategy seeking sustained economic growth with a diverse and active population.

2.2 Why it is important

Projected population change for the Borough to 2021 suggests Darlington’s population will increase from 98,200 to 99,300 (Teess Valley JSU). There will be 29% more older residents whilst those of working age will decline by 5%. Whilst planning to accommodate this change to meet the needs of the Borough’s residents, maintaining the proportion of the population who are economically active will be important. This reflects a key link between a diverse population and maintaining sustainable levels of economic growth.

2.3 The nature of the policy approach

The approach is informed by the overall strategy established at regional level through the emerging RSS. Providing a step change in economic growth and reversing the decline in the regions population are key goals and the development strategy seeks to reflect that.

The Borough is promoted as a location for economic investment providing the benefits of close links to the urban conurbations of the North East, with the Market Town character and advantage of the strong relationship between Darlington and its rural hinterland.

This highlights the opportunities presented in Darlington of available land supply, excellent transport links to key urban centres regionally and nationally, and the proximity of Durham Tees Valley Airport. Combined with an existing pool of skilled labour and the opportunity to attract new employees with excellent residential and working environments, and access to high quality rural areas within Darlington as well as the

Pennines and North Yorkshire.

2.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The key change will be to deliver a policy and an overall strategy that benefits from greater clarity and can act as a link for new and innovative developments. This sets the context for growth and development in Darlington in the context of its relationships with surrounding areas and the North East.

2.5 How will the policy be developed in the LDF

Through the Development Strategy section of the Core Strategy. More detailed criteria based policy will be developed within a Development Policies DPD. Scope for implementing the policy through Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents will be explored through the life of the Core Strategy.

CP2.2: Making the most of Darlington’s Compact Development Pattern

Under this policy:

Locational Strategy

New development will be concentrated within the existing urban area of Darlington or adjacent to the urban area where suitable sites are not available within it. Locations within easy access of homes jobs and services by all forms of transport (particularly public transport, walking and cycling), particularly in and adjacent to the town centre, the town centre fringes, the main transport interchanges, other centres, and along the main transport corridors will be preferred.

Development, which would strengthen the role of the town and other centres, or development, which helps to deliver significant benefits in the most disadvantaged wards, (e.g. health, education, regeneration) will be encouraged. A preference will be given to higher density and mixed use developments

Development within the villages will be encouraged where this meets identified local needs. Preference will be given to development within, and exceptionally (affordable housing and local employment or services only) adjacent to, the villages best provided with local services e.g. Heighington, Hurworth/Hurworth Place, and Middleton St George/Middleton One Row followed by within Bishopton, High Coniscliffe, and Sadberge.

Development in the countryside, which is integral to the development of the rural economy, will be supported. Provision will be made for other development, which, because of its scale, nature and locational requirements cannot be realistically located within the urban area and the villages. Other development will not be acceptable.

Implementation Strategy

Recognising that development principles are already established and commitments already made, appropriate support will be given for the delivery of the key drivers identified in the Economic Regeneration Strategy i.e. town centre, Central Park, Faverdale East and Morton Palms business parks, Durham Tees Valley Airport, and Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor. Provision will be made for rolling forward development priorities having regard to achievement levels, Community Strategy Action Plan updates, and reviews of the Community Strategy and Economic Regeneration Strategy.

Locational Constraints

Priority will be given to the redevelopment of previously developed land. Consideration will be given to development on greenfield land, where it is not protected for nature or heritage conservation or recreational purposes and:

- a) there is no preferable previously developed land genuinely available which is suitable for the development; or
- b) it is necessary to develop greenfield land in conjunction with development of the previously developed land; or
- c) there are [significant sustainability benefits] in development of other land in conjunction with development of previously developed alternatives; or
- d) the greenfield land offers regeneration benefits which would otherwise not be achieved

2.6 What it is about

The purpose of this policy is recognise the benefits offered by the compact development pattern of the Darlington Borough Council and through locational criteria optimise these benefits for future generations.

2.7 Why it is important

One of the overriding aims of the recently introduced planning legislation

is for moving towards more sustainable development. The location of development has a major impact on how sustainable the Borough can become. It can also improve the quality of life for our residents and visitors by ensuring easy access to work, leisure pursuits and services whilst providing added protection to the environment by removing potential conflicts.

2.8 The nature of the policy approach

The overall approach proposed to the location of new development underpins and is complemented by more detailed sequential approaches specific to individual types of development set out in Government policy; e.g. housing criteria set out in PPG3 (Theme 3) and town centre uses through the criteria laid out in PPS6 Development.

2.9 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy approach proposed builds on and expands the current approach as provided by the Local Plan.

2.10 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Additional criteria for site selection for new development will be set out in the Development Policies document. Any new allocations will appear in possible future allocations DPD.

CP2.3: Paying for the Costs Associated with Development

This policy will seek obligations in respect of:

- a) revenue costs during the early stages of development e.g. in respect of maintenance of public open space, provision of public transport
- b) related initial community infrastructure improvements e.g. countryside recreation, drainage, education, health, open space, physical gateways, public car-parking, public transport, roads, recreation, sport
- c) longer term commitment to wider community benefits e.g. affordable housing, public art, sustainable transport arrangements, training and employment for local residents/procurement for local businesses, use of renewable energy
- d) mitigation of adverse impacts in relation to development elsewhere e.g. environmental improvements in older housing areas

It will seek to establish certainty by specifying standard obligations by, for example, type of development, location (relative to community infrastructure, site development costs, costs of related off-site improvements), with provision in respect of individual developments for:

- e) abatement having regard to any wider community benefits and/or exceptional site development costs
- f) additional obligations in respect of exceptional impacts

The mechanism for securing an obligation will relate to the nature of the development and the nature of its impacts:

- g) revenue support will be sought by, for example, commuted sums (e.g. in respect of new housing development, equipped children’s play areas, open space, recreation, sport, sustainable transport, with no lower size threshold)
- h) obligations in relation to capital infrastructure works can be ‘one-off’ in relation to a single development, or pooled in relation to the cumulative impact of a number of developments
- i) obligations in respect of affordable housing can include, for example, initial provision of serviced land at no cost, contribution towards off-site provision, and maintaining affordability in perpetuity (the last two with no lower size threshold, contrary to current Government policy).

Planning obligations are prescriptive, compensatory or mitigatory measures, which can enable development to proceed that might otherwise be unacceptable, particularly in relation to the wider costs that development imposes. They are usually secured by legal agreement under planning legislation (‘S106 Agreements’). Up-to-date Government policy and advice is contained in ODPM Circular 05/2005, issued in July 2005.

2.11 What it is about

Planning obligations provide a means to ensure that a proposed development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities, particularly by securing contributions towards the provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities required by local and national planning policies.

2.12 Why it is important

There is an identified need to formalise the current approach of individual negotiations with developers with commuted sums and agreements reached on a case-by-case basis. This results in negotiations taking place on an ad hoc basis with a potential lack of uniformity between contributions from one development to another. This can create uncertainty for developers and means at times the opportunity to secure the correct level of contributions may be missed.

2.13 The nature of the policy approach

The Core Strategy will set out the principles for developer contributions in Darlington. The Government has yet to come to a final view on outstanding proposals for:

- an optional standard planning charge which developers can choose to pay instead of individual negotiation (November 2003 consultation)
- a levy on the increase in land value following planning permission ('planning gain supplement'), limiting use of S106 to provision of affordable housing and direct mitigation (Barker Review recommendation March 2004)

2.14 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The new provisions are likely to be much more detailed and prescriptive, in line with Government advice.

2.15 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Criteria will be set out in the Development Policies document whilst further details will be provided through the proposed Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Theme 3: Draft Housing

CP 3.1: Housing for All

Under this policy provision will be made for enough new homes to be built and enough existing homes retained and improved to meet existing and new residents' needs and aspirations

This policy will outline;

- a) the broad criteria for assessing the housing needs of groups such as first time buyers, key workers, people with impaired mobility, older people, Gypsies and Travellers
- b) the broad criteria for assessing the balance of provision between affordable and market housing, based on the relationship between local incomes and house prices
- c) the broad balance between the numbers of different household types to be provided for across the Borough.

In conjunction with analyses of the composition of the existing housing stock, household projections and local housing assessments, all of which will be regularly reviewed and updated, these will inform consideration of the mix of dwelling size, type, tenure and affordability to be sought in both new development and change-of-use/conversion of existing buildings in different parts of the Borough.

Note: the criteria will be finalised following completion of the first (2004) Local Housing Assessment.

<p>The definition of housing includes most forms of residential accommodation, including flats, bedsitters, hostels and static caravans.</p>	<p>3.1 <u>What it is about</u> The net number of new homes to be built 2004 to 2021 will be set by the Regional Spatial Strategy (5300 as recently submitted to the Secretary of State) This figure is based on household forecasts based on demographic trends, but the Government is considering moving towards forecasting based more on housing market conditions. In overall terms the housing stock is in relatively sound physical condition, although there are pockets in very poor condition. Any replacement of housing demolished would be additional to the Regional Spatial Strategy figure. Most people live in accommodation that physically meets or exceeds their needs, although there is past evidence of some concealed households. There are substantial disparities between some neighbourhoods in respect of cost/type of housing and tenure. The adequacy of existing provision for Gypsies and Travellers will be checked.</p> <p>3.2 <u>Why it is important</u> 'What makes a community sustainable is a well-integrated mix of decent housing of different sizes and tenures to support a wide range of households of different sizes, ages and incomes.' (ODPM Consultation 'Planning for Mixed Communities January 2005). The desirability of delivering high quality housing which does not restrain residents' life chances e.g. health, social mobility; stemming 'urban flight; and meeting the aspirations of potential in-migrants, including key workers.</p> <p>3.3 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> The recently commissioned local housing assessment will help to inform three policy strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o estimation of the overall number, type tenure etc of homes required; o the managed release of new homes; and o making the most of the existing stock of homes <p>3.4 <u>How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u></p>
--	---

	<p>Substantially strengthens existing Local Plan policies.</p> <p>3.5 <u>How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> Development Policies DPD and other DPD's/ SPD's as required.</p>
--	---

CP 3.2: Providing the Right Housing in the Right Place at the Right Time

Under this policy criteria for considering planning applications for new housing development, or change-of-use/conversion/alteration of existing buildings for housing, and for making housing allocations in any future development plan document, additional to those set out at Policy 2.2, will be that the proposal:

- a) is not on greenfield land at the edge of the urban area or a village (1) (except any affordable housing ‘exceptions’ proposals adjacent to better serviced villages); and
- b) contributes towards maintaining an appropriate supply of potential housing completions (i.e. with planning permission and taking into account phasing conditions); and additionally either
- c) makes a satisfactory contribution towards meeting housing needs and demand (including mix of housing, affordable housing, lifetime housing, live-work units) and towards the creation of more balanced communities, informed by Policy 3.1 and the most recent housing assessment; or
- d) is part of, and otherwise makes a significant contribution towards implementation of, a wider regeneration-based proposal e.g. mixed development (Policy 4.2), or environmental regeneration (Policy 6.3)

Note: (1) irrespective of its relationship to the development limits in the existing Local Plan

3.6 What it is about

There were some 2500 homes with planning permission at April 2005 and still to be built.

3.7 Why it is important

This is approximately 5 years supply at recent gross building rates relative to submission Regional Spatial Strategy requirements, and over 10 years supply relative to the Structure Plan. This constrains a plan-led approach to new housing development

3.8 The nature of the policy approach

This has a number of strands:

- o in the short term, meeting unmet needs and aspirations identified in the 2004 Local Housing Assessment;
- o moving towards a position where an effective mechanism is in place for the managed release of new housing, to enable the supply of housing to be more responsive to market conditions, for example, risk of market failure on the one hand, or market overheating on the other; and
- o moving towards a closer relationship of dwelling type to household type, whilst recognising and responding to any identified demand or other requirement for lifetime homes and/or live-work units
- o setting out criteria against which planning applications will be considered, and which will form the basis for allocating new sites in the future (should this be necessary if the numbers of new homes to be provided for significantly exceeds that proposed in the Regional Spatial Strategy submitted in July 2005).

3.9 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

Substantially strengthens existing Local Plan policies.

3.10 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Development Policies DPD and other DPD's/SPD's as required.

CP 3.3: Making the Most of the Existing Housing Stock

This policy will promote improvement of the existing stock of housing to better meet the needs and aspirations of existing and new residents by:

- a) Making housing areas more attractive to live in e.g. better access to jobs and services, community safety, environmental improvements, traffic management, redevelopment of inappropriate uses.
- b) Encouraging the extension, subdivision, amalgamation, disabled adaptation or other alteration of existing residential accommodation (including e.g. specialist communal accommodation, accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers) to:
 - 1) meet changing and differing household characteristics, needs and aspirations e.g. providing for working at home, people with disabilities/mobility impaired, people in need of care
 - 2) rehabilitating obsolete housing stock or otherwise providing decent living conditions
- c) Providing for the clearance and replacement of areas of housing in poor physical condition, if this were to be required to prevent further decline.
- d) Encouraging the change of use of existing non-residential buildings to residential use.
- e) Securing financial contributions to area improvements from new housing, and other related development (over the Borough as whole)

3.11 What it is about

Some parts of the Borough are perceived as being less desirable to live in than others, potentially leading to a 'spiral of decline'. Some small areas may be at risk of market failure. There are issues around obsolescence; aspirations for, for example, privacy, garden area, off-street parking; accompanying social deprivation; and the link between poor housing conditions, poorer health and lower educational and social attainment. Households often move to meet changing requirements. Some requirements may be difficult to meet e.g. live-work, supported accommodation (e.g. age, physical or health impairment). The 2004 Darlington Urban Housing Capacity Study estimates a potential yield of 30+ dwellings a year from changes of use and conversions.

3.12 Why it is important

Existing communities and the housing in which they live represent a substantial element of the Borough's social and infrastructure capital. Some small areas may be at risk of market failure. Intervention through retention and enhancement is potentially more sustainable than 'laissez-faire' /allowing to decline, and more costly than clearance, which may not be acceptable to local communities.

3.13 The nature of the policy approach

Provides for co-ordinated implementation of other plan-wide policies on an area basis, and co-ordinated area-based approach to housing renewal

3.14 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

Strengthens existing Policy H16, provides for more pro-active and wide-ranging approach to extension etc than existing reactive policies (e.g. Policies H12, H13). No existing policies relating to housing renewal.

3.15 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

First strand: area-based SPD's as required (area action plans may be required if significant land acquisition involved). Second strand: Development Policies DPD and design SPD's as required. Third strand:

	AAP's as required. Fourth and fifth strands: Development Policies DPD and other DPD's/SPD's as required.
--	--

Theme 4: Draft Business Industry and Employment

CP4.1: New Business, Industrial and Employment Development

To deliver a strategy that meets the needs of present and future residents and businesses and promotes sustainable travel and communities, the policy will:

- a) Maintain and enhance a diverse range of uses within the urban area of Darlington with preference for locations in and around the Town, extending north and east from the town centre, district centres, and locations well served by a range of transport options;
- b) Identify and maintain areas to the east and north of Darlington for high quality and strategic employment uses that contribute to attractive areas for business, able to take advantage of the Borough’s excellent transport infrastructure to improve the prosperity, environment and quality of life in Darlington
- c) Support development adjacent to Durham Tees Valley Airport for businesses seeking and that would benefit from an airport location;
- d) Explore the potential to promote and facilitate economic development within the communities of Darlington:
 - 1) to meet the needs of wards targeted for regeneration,
 - 2) to provide for the development of a viable rural area in the settlements, and in the countryside through farm conversion or diversification capable of contributes to the rural economy.
- e) Propose a local review of employment land supply to identify future demand and requirements for employment. Delivering a new portfolio of sites that reflects the above strategy and meets the employment needs of the Borough.

Economic Activities – Key element of this policy is to address requirements for what is often called employment land, mainly use classes B1, B2 and B8 but also some other uses providing employment.

Employment Land Review – key in developing policy for employment this would take stock of existing supply, identify future requirements and demand, and develop a New portfolio of sites as part of a site specific DPD.

Farm diversification is promoted to support the income of farms suffering declining agricultural returns. It can involve a range of activities from selling of

4.1 What it is about

The policy addresses supply, location and distribution of new land for employment, and the diverse range of economic activities. This shapes the extent and broad locations, where development for employment will be acceptable, and lays out an approach to the future identification of sites and areas across the Borough.

4.2 Why it is important

The amount, location and type of employment land and distribution of economic activity across the Borough has important implications for the relationship between often competing or conflicting uses and activities, enabling sustainable levels of economic growth together with long term enhancement of the environment and social well being of the Borough as a whole.

In establishing the broad locations where sites within the LDF can be identified the policy plays a key role in establishing the principle justification for permitting or refusing a development. It will also provide a core framework for the development of documents and studies, to provide the evidence base required to deliver and facilitate the suggested approach.

4.3 The nature of the policy approach

In keeping with regional policy that seeks a focus of development into the main towns, the key thrust of the policy will be to direct the majority of employment development in the Borough into and around the town of Darlington. Reflecting regeneration aims and to contribute to a viable

<p>produce on site, developing tourism or recreation activities or the change of use of buildings for business use.</p>	<p>rural economy the strategy also includes the option for developments of appropriate scale within the villages of Darlington and in the countryside in association with schemes to diversify farm incomes.</p> <p>Such rural area developments would require close scrutiny. It should be noted that for sustainability, community involvement, identified need, the potential for real benefits to vitality and viability and the suitability of sites and locations must all be considered to enable development to take place.</p> <p>Areas to the North and East of Darlington and also around Durham Tees Valley Airport are highlighted as key areas for development. These locations are capable of making significant contribution to the Borough and the region. Reflecting the value of these areas development that is strategic and of high quality capable of attracting investment and economic growth, whilst creating pleasant working environments will be of key importance.</p> <p>A local study of employment land supply is proposed to assist in identifying the qualities of the supply in the Borough. This would look to build on the overall spatial approach developed in the Core Strategy. Creating a diverse supply of employment land that is targeted to identify demands and requirements and in keeping with the sustainable pattern of development identified for the Borough.</p> <p><u>4.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u> This strengthens the concept of the urban area and sustainable locations key areas for employment and economic activity. A further key change from former policy is support for appropriate development in rural areas to support a sustainable and living countryside.</p> <p><u>4.5 How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> More detailed criteria based policies will be included within a Development Policies DPD. The need for a Supplementary Planning Document or Area Action Plan will be explored.</p>
---	---

CP4.2: Existing Business, Industrial and Employment Development

To build on the Borough’s success in attracting investment and employment to Darlington and to complement a strategy that recognises the importance of the urban area as a centre for business and industry, the policy will:

- a) Assist existing employment uses in the urban area seeking development for relocation or expansion, to reflect the spatial strategy and objectives of the Core Strategy.
- b) Establish as broad locations the town centre and areas to the north and east of the town centre and around key transport hubs, zones where proposals for a mix of uses would be supported that would enhance the attractiveness and vitality, and support the sustainability of those locations.
- c) In the broad areas above proposals for the loss of employment land will be acceptable where they would:
 - 1) include an element of employment as integral or complementary to the development, or
 - 2) where it can be demonstrated they would not undermine the mix of uses in the area.
- d) Development in any other area that would result in loss of employment from a site will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated that:
 - 1) integral or complementary provision of a mix of uses would not be appropriate for that site,
 - 2) the development proposed would not undermine the overall strategy for employment land, and
 - 3) would contribute to a sustainable pattern of development in the Borough.

Mixed-use Zones / Development – Areas where developments or groups of buildings comprise of different but often complementary uses creating diverse range of uses and activities.

4.6 What it is about

This policy considers existing and older employment areas, particularly within the urban area of Darlington. As areas these often provide quite a mix and range of uses but do not provide the infrastructure or environment to allow modern businesses to locate and expand. As former industries close or relocate buildings become vacant or underused leading to further deterioration in attractiveness of an area.

4.7 Why it is important

Loss of sites employment from the urban area effectively conflicts with the overall aims of this Core Strategy, which seeks a focus of all types of development upon the urban area. Replacement of employment sites, particularly with housing has the potential in the long term to lead to a dislocation within the urban area between housing and economic activities. This undermines efforts to increase linkages and accessibility between differing uses.

4.8 The nature of the policy approach

The policy seeks to accept the changing nature of the requirements of businesses whilst maintaining strong and sustainable areas of economic activity and employment within the urban area. To reflect this, businesses wishing to expand or relocate will be supported through the planning system to deliver a solution that enables their needs to be met wherever possible in proximity to their existing location and contributing to the strategy and objectives of the Core Strategy.

The policy identifies broad areas, including the town centre, that are

already developing or could potentially provide a greater mix of uses. In encouraging such development there is potential to improve the environment and economic potential of those areas. In future SPD's or a possible DPD it may prove appropriate to specifically allocate areas as Mixed Development Zones. The eventual aim of the policy is through a combination of explicit decision making and discrete encouragement and promotion, the areas involved will evolve to produce a wide range of economic and residential uses.

Overall employment land supply will remain an important issue. Though the policy advocates a more flexible approach in certain areas, the status of overall employment land supply will remain a key consideration for any development.

4.9 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

This suggests a shift in certain areas of the town from an approach that sought to maintain separation between employment areas and residential uses in particular. In these areas development for any other form of use were not permitted. Despite this the ability of existing policy to prevent alternative development is often weakened by competing priorities. This approach seeks to enable a more positive and proactive approach where a greater diversity of uses could be acceptable. This is easier with the shift away from manufacturing and warehousing towards service uses.

4.10 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

More detailed criteria based policies will be included within a Development Policies DPD. The need for a Supplementary Planning Document or Area Action Plan will be explored.

Theme 5: Draft Environmental Resources

CP5.1: Conserving Environmental Value

This policy has three aims:

- a) to protect identified sites and areas of rare or unique environmental value, including
 - 1) sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's);
 - 2) regionally important geological sites (RIGS);
 - 3) areas of high landscape value (AHLV);
 - 4) ancient woodlands;
 - 5) listed historic parks and gardens;
 - 6) parts of sites where there are trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's);
 - 7) grade 1,2 and 3a agricultural land.
- b) to promote environmental quality improvements on open spaces and countryside areas, targeting sites within and on the fringe of the urban area and main villages, including identified strategic corridors.
- c) to encourage the creation of additional areas of environmental value within new developments, and the incorporation of existing features of environmental value in the overall scheme design.

<p>Environmental value: encompasses biodiversity and landscape.</p> <p>SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest</p> <p>AHLV: Area of High Landscape Value. Currently these are River Tees Valley and the portion of the borough to the west of a line linking Redworth and High Consiccliffe.</p> <p>TPO: Tree Preservation Order</p> <p>Agricultural land classification: national grading system from 1 to 5, with 1-3a being the best and most versatile.</p> <p>Main villages: these are Heighington, Hurworth/Hurworth Place and Middleton St. George/Middleton One Row.</p>	<p>5.1 <u>What it is about:</u> The purpose of this policy is to provide additional protection for identified sites of environmental value and to increase the quality and quantity of these sites in association with new development and through environmental improvement programmes.</p> <p>5.2 <u>Why it is important:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural environment, including rare and unique environmental resources are under pressure from development; • There is a growing awareness and appreciation of the contribution the natural environment, including sub-regionally important natural sites and landscape features, make to our quality of life and to achieving sustainability; • The natural environment is a finite resource and losses are often difficult or even impossible to replace; • Development resulting in the diminished environmental value of these sites/areas should only be considered in very special circumstances, such as a development of sub-regional or regional importance. <p>5.3 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> By concentrating on improving sites such as local nature reserves and community forest on the fringes of the urban area and main villages will ensure that the benefits of any investment have the potential to be appreciated by the largest number of people, close to their homes. The strategic corridors provide an even sharper focus on the town's natural and historic features. Identified corridors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Skerne Valley 2) Cocker Beck 3) Stockton & Darlington railway corridor 4) Cemetery Lane 5) Nunnery Lane
--	---

- 6) former Barnard Castle railway corridor.
- 7) River Tees.

5.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

Conservation was a strong point of the Local Plan. This policy will provide an improved focus on the integrated management of areas of environmental value.

5.5 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Further detail on elements of this policy will appear in the Development Policies DPD, and will also be considered in the preparation of the Residential Design Guidelines and Planning Obligations SPD's.

<p>CP5.2: Sustainable Energy Management (renewable energy and energy conservation)</p> <p>This policy will, where this can be achieved whilst respecting the local environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) require renewable energy and energy conservation measures in the design and layout of new developments b) promote land use and development that results in the local capture and distribution of renewable energy resources 	
<p>Renewable energy:</p> <p>Low energy materials:</p> <p>Biogas:</p> <p>Energy crops:</p> <p>Energy-from-waste:</p> <p>Carbon neutral:</p> <p>Passive Solar and Photovoltaic Energy Harvesting:</p>	<p>5.6 <u>What it is about:</u></p> <p>The Borough's reliance on imported energy from non-renewable sources is increasingly costly and unsustainable. The bulk of energy consumption is associated with the construction and subsequent use of buildings. The contribution of motor vehicle use is also significant.</p> <p>5.7 <u>Why it is important:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planning process has the potential to reduce this reliance through the encouragement of sustainable design for developments and the use of renewable energy. This includes carbon neutral mixed use developments, the use of solar energy, careful choice of low energy, recycled or recyclable materials, better insulation. Benefits are also achievable through retro-fitting existing properties. • This can be justified, even where this may add to initial construction cost, provided that it delivers cost savings to the occupiers over the longer term whilst minimising the environmental cost of new developments. • There will be limited circumstances where other considerations may need to override this policy, e.g. where the proposals affect a listed building. • In addition, local renewable energy schemes, such as wind power, energy from waste, biogas and energy crops should be encouraged, provided that there is no conflict with other Core Strategy Policies. <p>5.8 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u></p> <p>This policy will require developers to concentrate on design aspects of new developments that can achieve energy conservation. It will also promote schemes for the local capture of renewable energy. The need to protect the local environment is accepted as an overarching consideration.</p> <p>5.9 <u>How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u></p> <p>The need for improved sustainable energy management has increased dramatically since the Local Plan was prepared. This policy will reflect this change by more pro-actively promoting sustainable energy management through the development process.</p> <p>5.10 <u>How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u></p> <p>Policies relating to renewable energy generating developments will appear in the Development Policies DPD. The inclusion of more detailed policies on sustainable design will also be evaluated. Detailed guidance on how to design residential developments that make the most of ambient energy sources and use low energy material will be considered in the Residential Design Guidelines SPD.</p>

CP5.3: Reducing the Environmental and Human Health Risks of New Development

This policy will favour development that:

- a) does not pose an undue risk to:
 - 1) the quality of soil within or adjoining the site;
 - 2) the quality of any watercourse or groundwater aquifer to which there is a pathway from the site;
 - 3) the quality of air in the vicinity of the site, whether noise or particulates and gases, if it is close to an existing or proposed pollution sensitive use, such as housing.
- c) reduces exposure to risk of flooding;
- d) re-uses and recycles previously developed land, existing buildings and materials;
- e) reduces the dependence on private motor vehicle use, through careful siting and design;
- f) involves the redevelopment of sites within the built up area that are known to be or are likely to be contaminated.
- g) results in the separation of pollution generating and pollution sensitive uses.

<p>Contamination: requires a source, pathway and receptor</p> <p>Greenhouse gases:</p> <p>Aquifer:</p>	<p>5.11 <u>What it is about:</u> To ensure that in the siting and design of new developments, the environmental risks of a development are minimised.</p> <p>5.12 <u>Why it is important:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some business and day-to-day activities, such as metalworking, construction, waste disposal and car travel, can pollute or contaminate the air (including noise, dust and smells), water and land. • There is a legacy of contaminated sites across the borough, whose clean-up is only likely if they can attract development • The Borough lies across an aquifer that requires protection. • Pollution and contamination can cause irreversible damage to environmental systems, flora and fauna, the quality of life and the health of the people affected by it. The escalating level of emissions from motor vehicle use, the production of manufactured goods and energy generation (so called greenhouse gases) is contributing to climate change. • By requiring that new development reduce these risks, many adverse local environmental impacts can be avoided or minimised. • The risk of exposure to potential pollutants can be further reduced if pollution generating uses and pollution sensitive uses are kept separate. • With the exception of Neasham village, there are currently no major flooding problems in the Borough. However, increasingly frequent short periods of intense rainfall, attributed to climate change, can overload the drainage infrastructure, resulting in localised flooding. <p>5.13 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> The policy will require that the adverse environmental impacts of developments be evaluated during the design stages and minimised or mitigated against.</p> <p>5.14 <u>How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u> This policy will lift these concerns to the strategic level and expand on the scope of policies in the Local Plan.</p>
--	---

	<p>5.15 <u>How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> The Development Policies DPD will include more detailed policies.</p>
--	--

Theme 6: Spaces and Places

CP6.1: Comprehensive Network of Open Spaces

A comprehensive network of high quality open spaces will be identified within and adjoining the main urban area and larger villages. These spaces will be protected and managed to meet the recreational needs of local people close to where they live, and to maintain and enhance the visual amenity, biodiversity and historic character of the Borough as a whole.

The key elements of this network will include:

- a) Formal parks, e.g. South Park, North Park, West Park, Eastbourne Park and the Denes;
- b) Local Nature Reserves, e.g. Brinkburn, Drinkfield and Maidendale;
- c) Green wedges, e.g. Cockerton Beck, Blackwell/Skerne Park and Haughton/Red Hall;
- d) Riverside footpath between Blackwell and Broken Scar;
- e) Community Woodlands, e.g. South Burdon, Skertingham and Merrybent;
- f) Darlington Railway Museum and undeveloped sections of the Darlington & Stockton railway track bed;
- g) The Market Place and High Row, Darlington town centre
- h) Village greens.

The loss of all or part of these sites will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and if they are found to no longer have any recreational, wildlife or amenity function, and are not needed to meet a shortfall in the provision of any other type of open space.

Open spaces are all types of greenspaces, such as playing fields, allotments, and informal recreation sites, but also include hard-landscaped civic spaces, such as the Market Place.

6.1 What it is about

Darlington has a high proportion of open space within its main built up areas compared to other towns of its size, and this aspect of the local environment is consistently cited by people as contributing to the local quality of life.

6.2 Why it is important

There is a core network of sites whose qualities, size, location and history give particular value to the Borough as a whole and contribute to its distinctive character. South Park is a historic park, attracting visitors from beyond the Borough. The local nature reserves are actively managed for public access and opportunities to enjoy wildlife, with community woodlands being similar, longer-term projects. Green wedges help to maintain the identity of distinct parts of the urban area, whilst the River Tees footpath is a key link in the long distance Teesdale Way. High Row and the Market Place are key elements of the Town Centre Conservation Area, but also provide day-to-day circulation space for shoppers, and a venue for markets and community festivals. The Borough's railway heritage attracts visitors in its own right, and village greens act as focal points for local communities, and often of conservation areas too.

6.3 The nature of the policy approach

This policy will identify and protect a network of sites that will be safeguarded for development in all but the most exceptional circumstances. The kinds of circumstances that would be regarded as exceptional would be where development of a small part of a site could secure lasting improvements to its quality as a whole, and where this could occur without damaging any of the qualities of the space that gave it its special value in the first place. Alternatively, where the development of the site (or part) would bring significant other benefits to the Borough as a whole (e.g. significant new employment) and alternative equivalent

or better provision of open space is made, in terms of its quality, quantity and accessibility. Management schemes will be subject to available resources.

6.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy is the top tier of a hierarchy of open space sites; the Local Plan treated all identified sites equally (E3). Policy E3 was also confined to the main urban area only. This policy addresses quality and accessibility, not just quantity of open space.

6.5 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Detailed policies to guide the provision, protection and enhancement of existing and any new open spaces will be contained, initially in Interim Planning Guidance on Open Spaces and subsequently in a Supplementary Planning Document. The means of securing new provision will be outlined in a Planning Obligations SPD.

<p>CP6.2: Playing Pitches</p> <p>This policy will set out the extent to which the existing playing pitch resource will be protected and how and where publicly accessible playing pitches can be made available. The precise approach will reflect the Council’s revised Playing Pitch Strategy, which is due to be completed this year.</p>	
<p>Playing Pitches and Playing Fields: a playing pitch is the actual marked out area of a sports pitch, plus its immediate surrounds for run-off. A playing field is all of the area within which a playing pitch is situated which is capable of forming a playing pitch.</p> <p>NPFA: National Playing Fields Association</p>	<p>6.6 <u>What it is about</u> The closure and relocation of schools and sports clubs and the development of playing fields for other uses can result in the loss of playing pitches, and once lost, they are very difficult to replace.</p> <p>6.7 <u>Why it is important</u> Playing pitches are an important sporting resource, particularly for younger people, providing an essential facility and focus for them to undertake beneficial physical activity. Pitches can also have an informal recreational role, providing local residents with a venue for casual play, walking and jogging.</p> <p>6.8 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> The Council supports the Government’s commitment to protecting playing fields wherever a shortfall in playing pitches has been identified. Work is nearing completion on a Playing Pitch Strategy to establish whether there is a shortfall or surplus of playing pitches in relation to existing and forecast future demand, and where there are local deficiencies in terms of quality and accessibility. Consultations on the strategy are expected to take place during the period of consultations on this document.</p> <p>6.9 <u>How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u> The Local Plan playing pitch provision is based on national (NPFA) standards. The approach in the LDF will have locally derived standards and levels of provision based on the findings of the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy.</p> <p>6.10 <u>How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> The town planning element of the Playing Pitch strategy, which will be developed in the Development Policies DPD, the Open Land SPD and Planning Obligations SPD, will include the protection of playing fields, measures to encourage the quality of the existing pitches and their ancillary facilities, and measures to encourage the more intensive use of existing under-used facilities, such as at schools and colleges.</p>

CP6.3: Poor and Degraded Landscapes and Townscapes

Environmental regeneration schemes will target land and buildings in the following four general locations, with priority being given to schemes that fall within more than one of them:

- a) the town centre and its approaches
- b) Bank Top railway station and surroundings
- c) main road, rail and river corridors
- d) the neighbourhood renewal strategy priority wards.

Where neglected buildings are structurally sound and of a form and character capable of re-use or more intensive use, the priority will be to enhance them and maintain them in their existing use or encourage another appropriate use. Where this is not possible, environmental improvement may include demolition and redevelopment, or the management of the site as open space.

Townscape:

The NRS priority wards are currently Bank Top, Central, Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles, Lingfield, Northgate, North Road and Park East, as identified by the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation.

6.11 What it is about

There are many neglected buildings and sites across the Borough that, in their current state, do little to convey a positive image of the Borough or the areas within it.

6.12 Why it is important

For many, this could be reversed with a little investment, and so help to improve the overall visual amenity and distinctiveness of the Borough, and as 'gateway' to the Tees Valley, the image of the whole sub-region. The local environment can also markedly affect local quality of life and local pride.

6.13 The nature of the policy approach

This policy approach builds upon the existing Local Plan approach. It would provide the framework for high profile, high visibility, heritage regeneration schemes such as Northgate Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (which is restoring original character) and the Pedestrian Heart works on High Row, but it would also mark out as important the value of environmental improvements in the priority wards. It also highlights a wider strategy priority of making the most of the existing built resource, and using opportunities within the urban area to increase the level of open space provision wherever a deficit is identified. Any proposals will be subject to funding being available.

6.14 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The Local Plan focus is more on degraded landscapes and derelict land. This policy shifts the emphasis to more visible urban areas where improvements can be achieved on the back of other initiatives.

6.15 How the policy will be developed in the LDF

Further detail on elements of this policy, such as appropriate uses, will be found in the Development Policies DPD.

CP6.4: High Quality, Distinctive Design

This policy will make high quality inclusive design a requirement of all new developments, such that:

- a) architectural and urban design are of the highest quality;
- b) the design respects and improves the local character and quality of an area, and is well connected to its surroundings;
- c) the materials will last with little apparent decay;
- d) the scheme will fulfil its intended use, free of crime or the fear of crime;
- e) the scheme is fully accessible.

The Council will also expect schemes, wherever possible, to make use of materials that incorporate sustainable materials, construction methods and layouts, in excess of any statutory requirements imposed through building regulations, etc. Exceptions may be made if the use of locally characteristic traditional materials, design elements and landscaping is necessary to conserve the character or appearance of the area.

Developers proposing any significant new development will be encouraged to tap into and develop local skills to implement their projects, and to include distinctive or 'iconic' elements in their schemes.

<p>Significant developments: include housing sites with 10+ units, or a site or 0.5ha+, and for any other development, a floor area of 1000sqm+ or a site of 1ha+. Also developments requiring an environmental assessment, or where the closure or alteration of a public right of way is proposed, or where the location of a smaller proposed development is particularly sensitive.</p> <p>Carbon neutrality:</p> <p>BREEAM: the Building Research Establishment's environmental assessment method</p> <p>Eco Homes rating: the BREEAM for domestic properties.</p> <p>FSC: Forestry Stewardship Certification</p> <p>SUDS: sustainable urban drainage systems: control</p>	<p>6.16 <u>What it is about</u> Design and sustainability are right at the top of the Government's objectives for planning. The layout of schemes, individual buildings and spaces can have a significant impact on the character, quality, accessibility and image of an area.</p> <p>6.17 <u>Why it is important</u> Too often, schemes are developed whose style and materials are unrelated to existing development in the locality, and whose layout and quality is so poor that they will become obsolete or unattractive within a generation, e.g. because of the opportunities for crime or poor accessibility. Our goal is high quality, inclusive design that demonstrates best practice in architectural and urban design, and that is sustainable, both in the sense of longevity and in terms of being environmentally friendly and socially beneficial.</p> <p>6.18 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> This policy requires a change in the approach to design of all those wishing to develop in Darlington.</p> <p>The Council will work with those seeking to submit planning applications to ensure that new developments help to make Darlington a better place to live, work or visit. Proposals that fail to add to the overall character and quality of an area and the way it functions, not just in the short term but also over the life of the development, are unlikely to be accepted.</p> <p>Whilst visual appearance and architectural character are important, good design also encompasses what buildings are made of, how they are sited, the relationship with surrounding buildings and features, and the layout and nature of any associated landscaping. It can often be achieved with little or no additional cost if the principles are embodied into schemes at the earliest stage. The Council will be looking, where possible, for such things as evidence of the use of wood from sustainable forests, carbon neutral products, products made from recycled material, sustainable</p>
---	--

<p>surface water run-off as close to its origin as possible, before it enters a watercourse, by using engineering solutions that mimic natural drainage processes, such as porous pavements.</p>	<p>urban drainage systems, rainwater capture, solar panels and building orientation in submitted schemes.</p> <p>However, the policy recognises that in many instances, such as development affecting conservation areas and listed buildings, the use of locally characteristic materials and more traditional forms of layout and design may be necessary to achieve a harmonious development, even though this may not result in the most environmentally-friendly development. In addition, significant new development at key sites around the town will be expected to be of a form or include elements that make it stand out as a local landmark, and whilst the Council will encourage potential developers to follow sustainability principles in designing these schemes, it is the quality of the design and the materials that will be the overriding design considerations in assessing these schemes.</p> <p><u>6.19 How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u> This policy is new; there is no comparable policy in the Local Plan. It reflects the priorities of planning set out in the Government's recent Planning Policy Statement 1.</p> <p><u>6.20 How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> Further details on the elements of this policy will be set out in the Development Policies DPD and in detailed design guidelines, such as a Residential Design Guidelines SPD.</p>
--	--

CP6.5: Existing Environmental and Cultural Assets

The Borough’s townscape, landscape, archaeological and nature conservation features will be preserved and enhanced as appropriate, taking account of their intrinsic value, the extent to which they can be appreciated from public places, and the fragility of their features.

<p>Fragility:</p> <p>Listed buildings:</p> <p>Scheduled Ancient Monument:</p> <p>Conservation Area:</p> <p>TPO:</p> <p>Historic Park/Garden:</p> <p>SSSI:</p> <p>Ancient woodland:</p>	<p>6.21 <u>What it is about</u> There is an irreplaceable stock of natural and man-made features and landscapes that contribute positively to the Borough’s history, culture and unique character. These include listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments, sites of special scientific interest (SSSI’s), ancient woodlands and trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s).</p> <p>6.22 <u>Why it is important</u> Once lost, these resources are difficult, if not impossible, to replace.</p> <p>6.23 <u>The nature of the policy approach</u> Public funding will be targeted at the sites and buildings where it can achieve most, complementing the universal protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of designated sites, buildings and features. Some designated features can be best safeguarded by incorporating them in new development, but more fragile or sensitive features may need to be left well alone.</p> <p>6.24 <u>How the approach differs from the Local Plan</u> This policy draws together at a strategic level the strands contained in several separate environmental conservation policies of the Local Plan. In addition, it adds priority for sites that are of public value.</p> <p>6.25 <u>How the policy will be developed in the LDF</u> Policies in the Development Policies DPD will detail the protection and enhancement that will be afforded to each type of designation.</p>
--	---

CP6.6: The Doorstep Environment

Local environmental improvement schemes will be promoted and supported across the Borough, focussing on the priority wards, and where works will also achieve other policy goals.

6.26 What it is about and why it is important

Well designed, managed and maintained open spaces and buildings can help to engender local pride, whereas evidence of neglect, decay and disrepair can have the opposite effect, giving rise to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

6.27 The nature of the policy approach

The focus would be on the priority wards, as identified on the basis of their levels of deprivation, in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The priorities for environmental improvements have been or are being identified by the Community Partnerships through their Community Action Plans.

There will be particular support for schemes where other objectives, such as preserving and enhancing conservation areas, will also be met.

6.28 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

This policy reflects the priority wards identified in the recent Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

Theme 7: Draft The Town Centre

CP7.1: Promoting the Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre

This policy will safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Darlington town centre, in order to promote and protect its role as a thriving sub-regional centre, accessible to all. The town centre will be specified as the first-choice location within the Borough for the development of a wide range of uses, which attract numbers of people from a town-wide or larger area - such as retail, leisure, entertainment and offices. Such development will be positively encouraged and provided for. Development proposals elsewhere which, either in themselves or cumulatively with other development, would undermine the role of the town centre will be resisted.

The policy will say that assessments of the need for additional development for such uses over the period of the Core Strategy will be carried out. It will acknowledge the possibility that not all of any forecast growth may be able to be physically accommodated within the boundaries of the town centre. It will also acknowledge that other considerations may point to the town centre not being the most desirable location for particular kinds of such development. The policy will set out the criteria for locating such new development outside the town centre. These will accord with the principles of sustainable development, including requirements for a sequential approach to site selection and good accessibility.

'Vitality' refers to how busy the town centre is at different times.

'Viability' refers to the capacity of the centre to attract ongoing investment.

The main 'town centre uses' are set out in Planning Policy Statement 6, Planning for Town Centres, (ODPM, 2005).

7.1 What it is about
 Darlington town centre is the focal point for shopping, services and other functions, not only for residents of the Borough but also for a population living well beyond it. It is one of the key economic assets of the Borough, providing employment and opportunities for the generation of wealth and prosperity. Access is good by all modes of transport - public and private, motorised and otherwise - ensuring a minimum of social exclusion and providing a location for truly sustainable development.

7.2 Why it is important
 The increasing mobility of much of the catchment population means that the town centre is more and more in competition with other centres and with out-of-centre locations, such as retail, leisure and business parks. Most of these have seen considerable investment in the past decade or so and the town centre, while still fairly healthy, has lost a degree of its vitality and viability. If this trend continued it would lead to a decline in the role of the town centre, increased social exclusion and a growth in unsustainable travel patterns.

7.3 The nature of the policy approach
 Following adoption of a Town Centre Strategy in 2001 work has proceeded on a number of fronts (including the Pedestrian Heart project and the proposed Commercial Street development) to reverse the trend by seeking to boost the attractiveness of the centre to shoppers and other visitors and to investors. At the same time, evolving planning policy, from national level downwards, has helped strengthen control over development proposals elsewhere in the Borough that could undermine the town centre and divert investment away from it.

If the centre is to maximise its sub-regional role and its full potential as an economic and social asset the recent impetus of pro-active planning and rigorous control of potentially undermining development will need to be maintained for the foreseeable future.

	<p>More detailed control policies will be set out in the Development Policies DPD, and site-specific policies and pro-active proposals will be set out in the Town Centre Area Action Plan, both to be prepared between 2007 and 2010.</p>
--	--

7.4 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy will strengthen and extend those of the Local Plan to reflect more up-to-date national policies.

Theme 8 Draft Transport and Accessibility

CP8.1: Accessibility for All

This policy will promote development, which will facilitate easy, safe and convenient access to facilities and services for all sections of the community by a range of modes of transport. It will do so by:

- a) Promoting development wherever appropriate in sustainable, accessible locations.
- b) Promoting mixed development, in order to foster linked trips and minimise the need to travel.
- c) Requiring development to be designed so as to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- d) Requiring development wherever appropriate to provide for sustainable travel options from the outset, such as providing bus services to or into it.
- e) Requiring proposals for development wherever appropriate to be accompanied by travel plans that will encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport by staff and visitors.

The Borough is one of only three locations nationally to have been selected by the Department of Transport to take part in a Sustainable Travel Town demonstration project between 2006-09. The Darlington scheme operates under the name 'Town on the Move'. It enables the Council to implement a wide range of solutions to transport problems in an integrated way, including so-called 'smart travel choices'.

8.1 What it is about and why it is important

Easy access to jobs, shopping, leisure and recreational facilities and other services is essential to a good quality of life and a prosperous, healthy community. Everyone, not simply people with cars, should have such access. For many years, the emphasis in Britain in both land use and transport planning was on providing principally for a car-borne society but this led not only to unsustainable and wasteful patterns of development and travel but to diminished accessibility for those without cars and ultimately greater social exclusion. Nationally and locally, the emphasis in recent years has shifted to promoting accessibility for all, widening real travel choices so that options other than the car are not only possible but in many cases will be the first preference of users.

8.2 The nature of the policy approach

Many of the detailed, operational, opportunities for widening travel choices in the Borough lie outside the scope of land use planning and will be promoted by the Local Transport Plan and the Town on the Move project. However, by shaping the pattern of future development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, policies of the LDF can help reduce the need to travel, and reliance on the car, and make it safer and easier for people to access facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.

8.3 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy will strengthen and extend those of the Local Plan to reflect more up-to-date national policies and the objectives of the Council's Provisional Second Local Transport Plan.

CP8.2: Access to Local Facilities

This policy will seek to protect and promote easily accessible local commercial and community facilities (such as shops and other services) for which there is, or is expected to be, a continuing need. The main strands will be:

- a) To protect existing facilities which continue to meet local needs by:
 - 1) resisting proposals for the redevelopment of their sites without appropriate replacement; and,
 - 2) resisting proposals elsewhere which would undermine their viability.
- b) To support existing facilities by helping ensure safe and easy access from nearby existing and proposed residential areas by public transport, walking and cycling.
- c) To work with others to identify and remedy deficiencies in existing provision by strengthening small local or neighbourhood centres and proposing new ones.

The policy will be complemented by another which will set out the network and hierarchy of centres within the Borough and establish the role and function that those below the town centre - district, local and neighbourhood centres - will fulfil in achieving the vision of the Core Strategy.

8.4 What it is about

Local facilities enable people to meet their day-to-day needs close to their homes, convenient for all ages and incomes. They reduce the need for, and length, of car journeys, easing congestion and pollution and encouraging healthier modes of transport. Facilities such as shops and pubs can be a focus for the community.

8.5 Why it is important

Existing Local Plan policies support the retention of local shops and services and encourage sites to be set aside in new development areas. However, local facilities have continued to decline during the Local Plan period and seem certain to continue to do so if the policies are not made more robust. The loss of some is inevitable because of financial circumstances and social trends but others appear to have been displaced not because of a demonstrable lack of need or viability but because other uses for the sites, particularly residential, can be more lucrative. Others still, have been rendered unviable by developments elsewhere which can cater for more mobile members of the community but leave less mobile people deprived and excluded and lead to a greater reliance on the car.

8.6 The nature of the policy approach

The Government, in PPS6, advises local planning authorities to take a positive and pro-active approach to planning for all types of centre and to seek to improve access to local facilities. Where appropriate, this includes seeking to protect existing facilities.

More detailed control policies will be set out in the Development Policies Development Plan Document. Research will be carried out to identify deficiencies in existing provision and the Council will work with developers, operators and the community to bring forward site-specific proposals.

8.7 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The policy will strengthen and extend those of the Local Plan to reflect more up-to-date national policies and the objectives of the Council's Provisional Second Local Transport Plan.

CP8.3: Transport Infrastructure

This policy will provide a framework for safeguarding land which will be required for strategic improvements to the transport infrastructure of the Borough. It will name schemes where they have already been identified and contain generic wording to cover those which have not yet. Schemes will be drawn from the Council's Second Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, from the requirements of the Highways Agency, which is responsible for trunk roads, and other schemes supported by the Council.

The Local Transport plan is presently at Provisional stage and its detailed content may change during the course of preparation of the Core Strategy. The main scheme for which provision will be made will be the proposed route of the Eastern Transport Corridor, between the A66(T) bypass and Haughton Road. The Provisional LTP makes no proposals in respect of completing a full Cross Town Route across the town, between Haughton Road and Faverdale, before 2011. Accordingly, it may not be appropriate to make provision for it in the Core Strategy. The Provisional LTP proposes a feasibility study into a possible Park & Ride scheme for Darlington and the Core Strategy may need to make provision for a possible site for it.

The upgrading to dual carriageway of the section of the A66(T) bypass north of the A67 Yarm Road junction, partly by providing a bypass of the Great Burdon, is recommended by the A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway Study. The Council supports this proposal, and considers that the remaining section, south of the A67 Yarm Road junction to Blands Corner, should also be upgraded to dual-carriageway standard. The policy will make appropriate provision for both.

The submitted Regional Spatial Strategy includes policies supporting the improvement of other strategic transport infrastructure, including that connected with:

- developing Darlington as a strategic public transport hub
- improving accessibility and efficiency of movement along the East Coast Main Line railway and Tees Valley rail links
- developing a modern integrated public transport network for the Tees Valley:
- encouraging the growth of passenger and freight services from Durham Tees Valley Airport (including expansion of facilities and improvement of surface access links)

The Council supports these, and the policy will make appropriate provision for them, indicating schemes where requirements have already been identified.

The Council's Second Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 is presently at Provisional stage. It was submitted to the Department of Transport in July 2005. A Final plan will be submitted to the DTp in March 2006.

8.8 What it is about and why it is important

The Cross Town Route is a long-standing proposal but the likelihood of the central section between Haughton Road and Faverdale being built is increasingly remote. It would be complex and expensive to construct, be sensitive environmentally, and would open up relatively little development land. The emphasis in transport planning has shifted considerably since the Route was first proposed in the 1970s, with a shift now to promoting wider travel choices and less focus on the construction of new roads. This is reflected in the proposed priorities, policies and programme of the Council's Second Local Transport Plan, 2006-2011.

The Eastern Transport Corridor follows the line of the eastern section of the Cross Town Route. Unlike the central section, it would have widespread benefits including opening up development land, relieving congestion and facilitating non-car modes of transport. All the necessary permissions and agreements are in place and the Council is awaiting a Government decision on funding during summer 2005. Should this not be forthcoming the scheme will be resubmitted for approval as part of the Final Second Local Transport Plan.

The A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway Study, commissioned by the North East Assembly and partners, including the Council and the Highways Agency, was published for consultation in December 2004. It considered, amongst other things, a range of options to reduce congestion and improve safety on the A66(T) Darlington bypass. Recommendations have been made to Government about the way forward. The preferred option includes the upgrading to dual carriageway of the section north of the A67 Yarm Road junction, partly by providing a bypass of the Great Burdon roundabout north of the proposed Eastern Transport Corridor junction. A final decision rests with the Government, through the Highways Agency, but it is important to safeguard the possible land requirement unless and until a decision is made to the contrary. The Council considers that the entire A66(T) bypass should be upgraded to a dual carriageway in view of the international, national, regional and local importance of the road from coast to coast.

Park and Ride schemes have been discussed in the past for Darlington but the town has never been considered to have the right combination of circumstances to warrant their introduction. The Local Transport Plan proposes a feasibility study to assess the proposition. If agreed to be feasible, a site would need to be found for implementation during the period up to 2011. Pending the outcome of the study, provisional reference to a land allocation will need to be made in the Core Strategy.

The submitted Regional Spatial Strategy advocates a range of public passenger and freight transport infrastructure and operational improvements, which could both benefit from and contribute towards Darlington's 'gateway' role. There are as yet few firm proposals.

8.9 How the approach differs from the Local Plan

The general approach to safeguarding land is unchanged. The specific schemes to be identified will represent the most up-to-date proposals. The most notable changes will be the addition of possible provision for a Park & Ride site and the possible omission of a corridor for completion of the Cross Town Route. The Local Plan already safeguards land for the expansion of operational development at Durham Tees Valley Airport.