

**Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy:  
Public Participation on Preferred Options**

**Background Information: Policy and Procedures**

**The Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy, when adopted, will provide the overarching strategic policy component of the new Local Development Framework. It will draw on strategies of the Council and other organisations that have implications for the development and use of land, for example the community strategy and local transport plan, and provide an integrated approach to their implementation. It should seek to implement the spatial and transport policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy and incorporate its housing requirement.

It will comprise:

- a) a long term spatial vision and strategic objectives for the Borough
- b) a spatial strategy
- c) core policies
- d) a monitoring and implementation framework with clear objectives for securing delivery

It will be illustrated in diagrammatic form eg key diagram, but it will not identify individual sites. This will be done in later development policy and/or site allocation development plan documents when the core strategy has been adopted.

Key references:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) and Companion Guide

**National Policy and Guidance**

Since the Cabinet meeting on 10 May 2005 the Government has:

- a) issued two further planning policy statements (PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management) and a circular (05/2005 Planning Obligations); and
- b) consulted on Planning for Housing Provision (a further consultation paper in advance of consultation on a replacement for Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing) and Annexes to a consultation draft minerals planning statement (MPS1: Planning and Minerals).

Key references:

Planning Policy Statement 1: Planning for Sustainable Communities (PPS1) ODPM 2005  
ODPM Website

### **Regional Spatial Strategy**

Regional Planning Guidance for the North-East (RPG1) is the current regional spatial strategy. A replacement, View: Shaping the North-East, was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2005 following consultation in late 2004, and is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. Several existing and emerging policies directly impact on Darlington and will need to be addressed by the core strategy as it emerges, particularly those relating to:

- a) the numbers of new homes to be built;
- b) the amount of employment land to be allocated;
- c) the relationship of the Borough to the surrounding area;
- d) the role of the town centre;
- e) the currently proposed mixed-use development at Central Park;
- f) the reserve employment site at Faverdale;
- g) the role of, and development at, Durham Tees Valley Airport;
- h) improvements to the road network (Darlington A66(T) bypass and Eastern Transport Corridor)
- i) the Borough's role as public transport hub

Key references:

Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS11) ODPM 2004  
North of England Assembly website

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

The extent and nature of involvement of the public and other stakeholders in the preparation of each of the local development documents that together will comprise a Local Development Framework is for each planning authority to determine through its Statement of Community Involvement. Minimum requirements are set out in Regulations and an Annex to Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks.

Further to Cabinet's consideration at its meeting on 15 March 2005, and Council's endorsement at its meeting on 7 April 2005, the revised draft Darlington Statement of Community Involvement was submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 April 2005. It is now being considered by a Planning Inspector, who is expected to make recommendations, which will be binding on the Council, in October this year.

The revised draft can be accessed electronically from the planning policy pages on the Council's website, and paper copies can be obtained from the Town Hall. The

proposed arrangements for involvement in the preparation of local development documents are set out in Chapter 2 and Appendices 1 and 2.

These include a proposal to establish a Darlington Planning Forum which will provide a permanent mechanism for consulting and involving local people at all key preparation stages. Its constitution and terms of reference were confirmed by Council on 21 July 2005.

Key references:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) and Companion Guide ODPM 2004  
Community Involvement in Planning: the Government's Objectives ODPM 2004

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

All local development documents require a sustainability appraisal to find out whether they are likely to promote a sustainable pattern of development and, where possible, to avoid or mitigate any significant social, environmental or economic effects. Most local development documents, including core strategies, also require strategic environmental assessment resulting from European legislation.

Sustainability appraisal should:

- a) take a long-term view of whether and how the area covered by proposed policies is expected to develop, taking account of the social, environmental and economic effects of those policies;
- b) provide a mechanism for ensuring that sustainability objectives are translated into sustainable planning policies;
- c) reflect global, national, regional and local concerns;
- d) provide an audit trail of how the plan has been revised to take into account the findings of the appraisal;
- e) form an integral part of all stages of policy formulation.

The Government recommends satisfying both requirements through a single independent appraisal process, which should be started when a local development document is first considered, and then provide input at each stage when decisions are taken. The Council is using consultants BDP to undertake this work for the Core Strategy, assisted by a sustainability appraisal group comprising statutory and other consultees, local bodies and interest groups, other Council officers, and two members of Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Key references:

Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Consultation Paper ODPM 2004

## **Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Establishing clear and specific objectives guides the selection and measurement of indicators and targets. The monitoring and evaluation of progress towards meeting objectives and targets then helps to ensure the effective operation of policies, or highlight any changes that may be needed.

Once objectives have been identified and the related policies developed, it is possible to identify relevant indicators and set appropriate targets against which movement towards or away from policy objectives can be measured over time.

Policies should also be monitored in terms of their performance against sustainability appraisal objectives and targets. These serve a different purpose from local development framework targets and indicators, although they may overlap.

Key references:

Monitoring Regional Spatial Strategies: Good Practice Guide on Targets and Indicators ODPM 2002

Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Consultation Paper ODPM 2004

Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide ODPM 2004

## **Evidence Base**

Local development framework policies should be informed by a thorough understanding of the needs of an area and the opportunities and constraints that operate within it. This involves preparing and maintaining an up-to-date information base, to which all have access, and which includes:

- a) information provided by a variety of national, regional, sub-regional and local agencies eg Office for National Statistics, National Land Use Database, North of England Assembly, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, Darlington Assembly;
- b) information collected directly by the Council;
- c) local studies eg: local housing assessments, urban capacity studies;
- d) relevant plans and strategies of other agencies;
- e) information on the effectiveness and continued relevance of existing development plan policies.

A summary is already provided in the Local Development Scheme. More is now in place, with either direct access or links from the planning policy pages of the Council's website. The work on the core strategy has, however, had to proceed in advance of completion of some key areas of work, including:

- a) housing needs and demand to meet current and emerging ODPM advice and requirements (a local housing assessment has just been commissioned with results expected towards the end of this year);
- b) employment land review and related studies in accordance with recent ODPM guidance;

- c) open space audit and related studies in accordance with ODPM and CABE advice and requirements (work underway, expected to be completed next year)

Key reference:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) and Companion Guide  
Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks Consultation Paper ODPM 2004

### **Annual Monitoring Report**

An annual monitoring report should be submitted to the Secretary of State before the end of each calendar year. It is required to assess:

- a) the implementation of the local development scheme; and
- b) the extent to which policies in local development documents are being achieved

It should, amongst other things:

- a) review achievement of local development scheme targets and milestones;
- b) assess the need to update the local development scheme and the steps and timetable required for any revision;
- c) assess whether policies are being achieved and if not, why not;
- d) provide a trajectory of anticipated net housing provision;
- e) assess whether policies need adjusting, and how;
- f) set out core output indicators, against which policy implementation must be monitored.

Key references:

Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide ODPM 2004

### **Relevant Regulations**

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004  
The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

**September 2005**