

DARLINGTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options

January 2010

Foreword

Following consultations on Issues and Options and Preferred Options in 2008, I am delighted to now invite comments on this Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options document.

This document takes account of the feedback that we received on the Preferred Options and Issues and Options, and is also underpinned by new information that we have collected over the past year across several themes.

Our thinking in key policy areas such as employment, housing and transport has moved on significantly since the Preferred Options. The revised preferred options set out broadly how much new development will be required over the next 15 years or so, where and when, and the sustainable transport and other infrastructure provision that will be required to support it. I recommend that you have a look to see how this might affect you and the life you want to live in Darlington between now and 2026.

This document is a draft of what we intend to submit to Government for independent examination. By having your say now, you could influence the final content of the Core Strategy that will be submitted to Government later this year.

Please get involved as fully as you can by writing to the Council, responding on-line, or coming along to one of the consultation events that have been arranged.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council and Economy Portfolio Holder

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1. INTRODUCTION

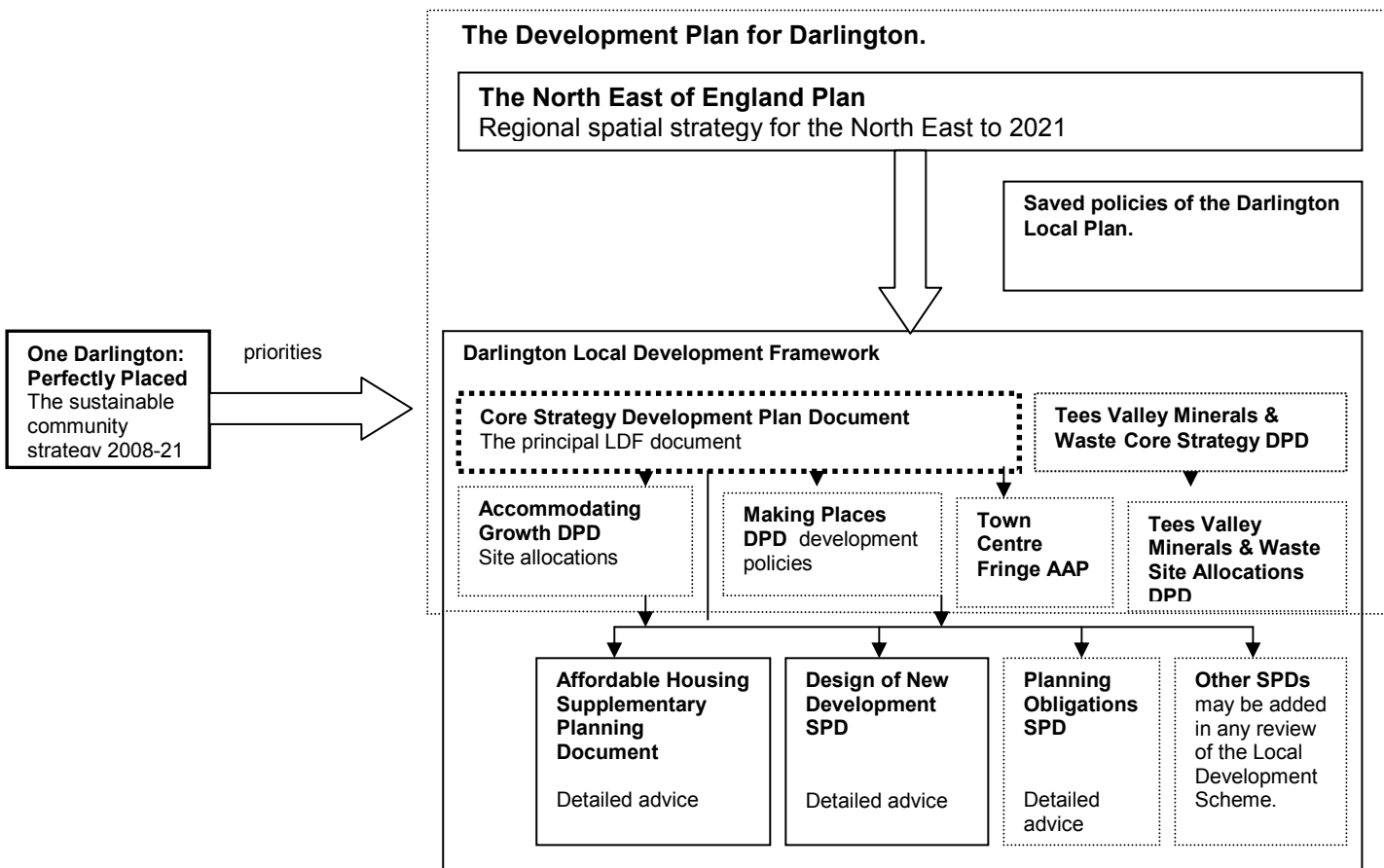
1.1 What is this document and why is it important ?

1.1.1 This document, once adopted in its final form, will be the principal document of the Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents¹ which will eventually replace the adopted Darlington Local Plan. It considers how the Borough will develop over the next fifteen years or so, providing the spatial planning framework for the many plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners. In particular, it will help to deliver spatially the priorities that are set out in the sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', prepared by Darlington Partnership and agreed in 2008.

¹The Darlington Local Development Scheme 2009-12 sets out the LDF documents that the Council will produce over the next 3 years, and the timetable for producing them.

1.1.2 The Core Strategy and other development plan documents of the LDF will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough along with the published regional spatial strategy 'The North East of England Plan' (see Figure 1.1). The development plan informs a range of implementation plans and decisions on planning applications.

Figure 1.1: Relationship of the Local Development Framework (LDF) to 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' and the Relationship of the Core Strategy to other LDF Documents



1.1.3 'Saved' policies of the adopted Borough of Darlington Local Plan remain part of the development plan until superseded by an adopted development plan document. **Appendix 1** sets out the 'saved' Local Plan policies that Core Strategy policies will supersede.

1.1.4 Other documents that make up the LDF will be prepared in accordance with the programme set out in the Local Development Scheme 2009-12¹.

1.2 The Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options and how we got here

1.2.1 This document is the Revised Preferred Options for the Core Strategy. It sets out an overall vision of how Darlington Borough and places within it should develop, and the strategic objectives that will ensure key spatial issues are addressed. This is followed by revised draft planning policies, arranged around seven themes and broad information about how, when and with whose resources the strategy will be delivered. The document also includes information about how the strategy will be delivered and how progress in delivering it will be managed and monitored. It also includes a Key Diagram that illustrates the broad locations to which the revised draft policies refer.

²The five Tees Valley local authorities are Darlington, Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Councils. More details about the Minerals and Waste documents can be found at www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

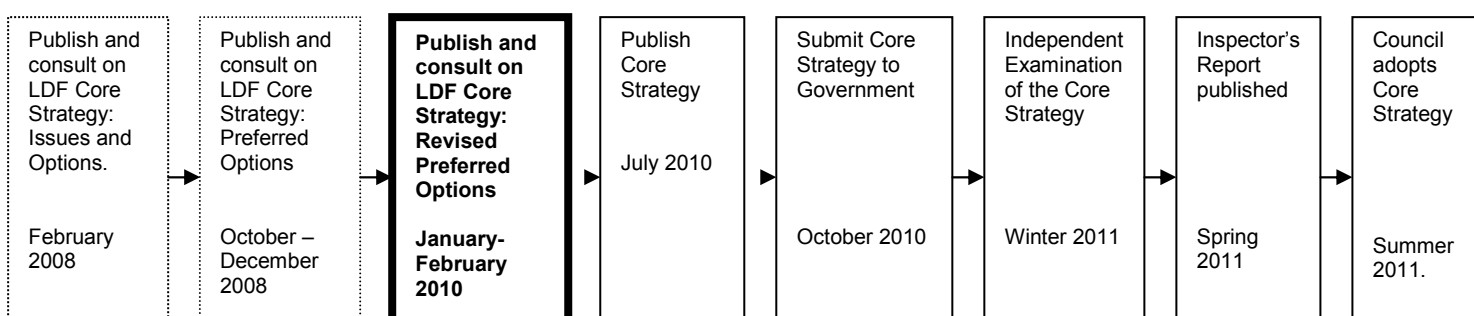
1.2.2 This Core Strategy deals with all land use and development issues affecting Darlington, except for minerals and waste; these are covered in the Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, which is being prepared jointly by the five Tees Valley local authorities, and is due to be submitted to the Government for Independent Examination shortly².

1.2.3 Preparation of this Core Strategy is in accordance with the required procedures set down in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

³See www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy for all documentation relating to preparation of the LDF Core Strategy.

1.2.4 Publication of this document follows consultations that were carried out on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, published in October 2008, and prior to that, the Core Strategy: Issues and Options, published in January 2008 (see Figure 1.2). The comments received in response to both those consultations, together with updated national and regional planning policy, recently completed studies³ and the findings of a sustainability appraisal and ongoing Habitats Regulation Assessment (Appropriate Assessment), have informed the preparation of this document. Summaries of consultation responses to the Preferred Options document and to the Issues and Options report have been published on the Council's website, and the sustainability appraisal of this document and the findings of further Habitats Regulation Assessment work has also been published there. **Appendix 2** lists the studies that have also underpinned policy development, while **Appendix 3** lists the plans and programmes that have been taken into account in preparing this document.

Figure 1.2: Key Stages in the Process and Timetable Leading to Adoption of the Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy



1.2.5 This Revised Preferred Options document replaces the Preferred Options previously published. In many cases, the draft revised policy reflects one or more of the options that were considered at the Issues and Options stage. In other cases, e.g. strategic locations for new housing development, and renewable energy, new options have been generated since the Issues and Options report was published; where this has been the case, this is clearly stated.

⁴See Appendix of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, published separately on www.darlington.gov.uk

1.2.6 The sustainability appraisal framework has also been refreshed since the original work was carried out on Issues and Options. A refreshed appraisal of the Issues and Options has been carried out⁴, and its results taken into account in formulating the revised draft policies.

1.3 Having your say

⁵Darlington Local Development Framework: Statement of Community Involvement, adopted November 2005

1.3.1 The Council is inviting comments on the revised draft policies and anything else contained in this document, in accordance with its guiding principles for involving the community in the preparation of new planning documents, as set out in its adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)⁵.

1.3.2 The revised draft policies represent the Council's preferred options for addressing the planning issues arising in Darlington. The other options that the Council has considered are outlined in the text introducing each revised draft policy, and the reasons why they have been rejected are also given.

1.3.3 The Council wants to know if you agree with the draft revised policies, whether you think one of the rejected options should be pursued, or whether there is another option that has not even been considered. **You can express a preference for any option, including those rejected by the Council, or you can propose another option that the Council has not considered.**

1.3.4 If you do not agree with the Council's preferred options, you should provide as much information as possible to explain your reasons, and be clear about exactly what you would like the document to say instead. This is because in considering all responses to this consultation, the Council will have to consider your views and any new information you provide against the information contained in technical studies and policy documents already completed.

1.3.5 Responses to this consultation should be made within the advertised period, **20th January to 28th February 2010 inclusive**. Details of the associated programme of consultation events can be found on the Council's website, www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy, and at the Crown Street, Cockerton and mobile libraries. It is also being publicised in the local press.

1.3.6 Responses to the consultation can be made using the comments form provided. Copies of these are available in the local libraries, or can be downloaded from the Council's website. Alternatively, you can use the on-line reply facility at www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

1.3.7 Completed forms and any other comments should be sent to the Council's Planning and Economic Strategy Manager.

By post: Planning and Economic Strategy Manager
Chief Executive's Department (Regeneration)
FREEPOST nea2890
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

By e-mail: planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

THE CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMMENTS IS SUNDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2010.

1.3.8 For more information on the LDF Core Strategy and how to make comments on it, please visit the Council's website, www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

1.4 Next Steps

1.4.1 Once the consultation period has finished, the Core Strategy will be prepared for submission to Government for independent examination. It will be published prior to submission, at which time objections and representations regarding the soundness⁶ of the document can be made. Figure 1.2 above sets out the process and approximate timetable leading to adoption of the LDF Core Strategy. A summary of all the responses received to this consultation, together with the actions that will be taken on them, will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the consultation period closes. Notification of its publication will be made in the Town Crier.

⁶The tests of soundness are nationally prescribed; they are around whether the document is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

1.5 Contact Details

1.5.1 To contact a member of the Planning and Environmental Policy Team about this consultation or anything in it, please telephone 01325 388644 or send an e-mail to planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk.

2. DEVELOPING A SPATIAL VISION FOR DARLINGTON

2.1 Policy Context

2.1.1 To ensure that this LDF Core Strategy is deliverable, it is important that it fits in with other national, regional, sub-regional and local policy frameworks. It is through these clear links with other plans, policies and programmes that the strongest possible case can be made to secure the funding that is required to implement the spatial policies and proposals contained in this document.

National Policy Context

2.1.2 This LDF Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options document has been drawn up in accordance with the most up to date national planning policy. This is set out in planning policy guidance notes, planning policy statements, ministerial statements and circulars issued by the Government¹.

¹Most of these can be found at www.communities.gov.uk

Regional Planning Context

2.1.3 This LDF Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options document has been drawn up so that it is in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy (RSS)², 'The North East of England Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021', published in July 2008 by the Government Office for the North East.

²The RSS sets out the long term spatial development strategy for the region. It is the regional element of the statutory development plan which, together with the Darlington LDF, shapes future development within the Borough.

2.1.4 Darlington is seen as having a key role in contributing to regional economic growth in the RSS, being identified as a Main Town and Sub-Regional Centre for employment, retail, leisure and culture. Its unique accessible location and market town character are recognised as being able to attract employment in the financial, business services and logistics sectors, which may otherwise not locate in the Tees Valley or North East. The RSS refers to Darlington as a gateway to the Tees Valley and North East, and acknowledges that it is perfectly placed to attract high quality businesses and employment to the region.

2.1.5 Some of the key provisions of the RSS that are relevant to Darlington are:

- (a) Darlington is identified as a priority for development within the region, with the focus on brownfield opportunities in Central Darlington;
- (b) the Faverdale and Heighington Lane areas are identified as key employment locations;
- (c) additional university capacity is identified in the Central Park area;
- (d) Darlington is identified as having a role in providing high quality accessible housing to enable the sub-region to compete for employment at the higher, value-added, end of the business and financial services sector;
- (e) transport improvements in Darlington Borough could be pivotal to achieving the RSS objective of improving connectivity within and beyond the Region: two of the four strategic transport corridors identified in the RSS pass through the Borough - the A1/East Coast Main Line corridor and the A66/Tees Valley rail line corridor, Darlington is identified as a Strategic Public Transport Hub³, and Durham Tees-Valley Airport is identified as a key international gateway into the region, with the potential for freight and passenger traffic growth;
- (f) maintaining separation between Darlington and its surrounding towns and villages, through the identification of *Strategic Gaps*⁴, and encouraging more community woodland to the north and east of Darlington.

³A strategic public transport hub is a key regional or sub-regional transport interchange, with high levels of public transport accessibility.

⁴Strategic gaps maintain the separate identity of settlements, preventing coalescence.

2.1.6 The RSS also identifies that Darlington needs to contribute to the sub-regional objectives for the Tees Valley, such as renewable energy, identifying new land for housing, particularly previously developed land, improving the existing housing stock, and improving connectivity within the sub-region, by investigating a rail-based Tees Valley Metro.

Sub-regional Policy Context

2.1.7 Since publication of the RSS, there has been no statutory planning framework at the sub-regional level. However, the five Tees Valley local authorities⁵ and their partners have published a number of documents that set out an agreed approach to tackling the key challenges in the Tees Valley. In 2006, the Tees Valley City Region Business Case⁶ was published, underpinned by a ten-year investment plan. Two themes of the plan relevant to spatial planning are improving economic competitiveness and quality of life, which focus on transport, regeneration, environment and housing market

⁵Darlington, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Councils.

⁶Tees Valley City Region: A Business Case for Delivery.

renewal projects. It specifically identifies the economic assets in Darlington, such as logistics and the airport, as priorities for investment.

⁷Tees Valley Unlimited is made up of representatives of the five Tees Valley local authorities, and key private and public sector partners.

2.1.8 The Tees Valley Local Authorities also signed a Multi Area Agreement with the Government in July 2008, so that major programme funding, such as from the regional housing board and the regional transport board, could be co-ordinated and targeted toward sub-regional priority projects. Tees Valley Unlimited(TVU)⁷ was formed and now coordinates strategic economic development and other programmes sub-regionally, with the aim of improving overall economic performance.

⁸This is the core of the 'Town Centre Fringe' strategic location identified in draft policies CS1, CS5, CS7, and CS10.

2.1.9 Sub regionally, 'Darlington Gateway' is identified as one of only three spatial priorities for the sub region as whole. This priority is a long term vision and strategy (to 2020) for economic growth in the western part of the Tees Valley, and a key spatial element of it is a continued and widened supply of employment land to ensure that the benefits of regeneration are sustained and brought to all. It will have a particular focus on the area between the town centre and the railway station and the Central Park development⁹, to ensure Darlington continues to develop as a strong, cohesive, regenerated town.

⁹Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD and Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Policies and Sites DPD: both due to be submitted to Government in early Spring 2010.

2.1.10 There is also sub regional collaboration and joint working in a range of other specific policy areas. For example, as a result of a joint bid, the Tees Valley was awarded Housing Growth Point status in 2008, bringing in extra funding for housing delivery. The Tees Valley local authorities are preparing joint Minerals and Waste development plan documents⁹, an updated Tees Valley Housing Strategy is currently being prepared, and technical studies such as the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment have been commissioned jointly.

2.1.11 As Darlington shares administrative boundaries with County Durham and North Yorkshire (see Figure 2.1), there can be cross boundary planning issues that affect both Darlington and adjacent local authorities. Specific regard has been had in policy to the following cross boundary issues:

- Some limited additional pressure for new housing in Darlington Borough arising out of the ongoing expansion of Catterick Garrison in Richmondshire District, and a policy to encourage dispersal of service personnel into the civilian communities nearby.
- For the upper end of the housing market, the south-west of Darlington and its rural areas form part of a wider housing market, extending across the south of the Tees Valley as a whole and into North Yorkshire.
- New housing development proposed to the north-west of Darlington's main urban area may be attractive to people who work in south-west Durham, and any to the east of the main urban area may attract people who work in other parts of the Tees Valley.
- Ensuring that plans for the growth and development of Durham Tees Valley Airport, which straddles the boundary between Stockton and Darlington Borough administrative areas, are properly co-ordinated between the two local planning authorities.
- Ensuring that proposals for renewable energy generation, particularly wind power, have regard to the cumulative impact of proposals across a wider landscape area that encompasses parts of Stockton Borough and Durham County.

Further detail on these issues is given in the relevant theme chapters.

Figure 2.1: Darlington's neighbouring local authority areas.

(to insert)

2.2 The Darlington Economy and its Prospects

¹⁰ONS

2.2.1 The population of the Borough was estimated to be 100,500 in mid 2008¹⁰. 60.4% of the population is of working age, which is at least 1% below the overall levels in the Tees Valley, region and nationally. This is projected to increase to 62.2% by 2021 (ONS 2006 based projections), in contrast to a declining picture regionally and sub-regionally.

2.2.2 Rates of economic activity in Darlington have been consistently above the average levels recorded sub-regionally and regionally, and in the last three years, have moved above the national average, to 79.4% in 2008/09². The pattern is very similar for the overall employment rate, which is 74.8% (2008/09), compared with the sub-regional figure of 68.3% and the national figure of 74.2%.

2.2.3 Over three-quarters (78.7%) of Darlington residents in employment work in service industries. The public sector and distribution, hotels, etc, account for about two thirds of these service industry jobs. Manufacturing and primary industries together now account for only about 10% of all jobs, with the proportion of jobs in construction at a similar level. Small businesses (as measured by VAT registrations) are more prevalent in the Borough than in the rest of the Tees Valley and the north east in general, but they have not changed much since 2001 and remain significantly below national levels.

¹¹2008 figures for NVQ levels 2+, 3+ and 4+.

2.2.4 People of working age in Darlington are generally more educated and skilled than in the Tees Valley as a whole, regionally or nationally¹¹. Education and skills levels have shown an upward trend since 2001, when the levels were around the regional average but below the national average. These high skill and education levels are reflected in the type of employment of Darlington residents; 28.8% are in professional, managerial and senior roles, which is above national, regional and sub regional levels, whilst the proportion employed in skilled trades is similarly above national, regional and sub regional levels.

¹²Darlington Gateway Strategy, December 2006 by BDP/King Sturge/Regeneris/CI:P

2.2.5 A study carried out in 2006¹² found that the economy of Darlington had performed strongly over recent years. It had the highest GVA per capita¹³ of the North East's local authorities and had seen a rate of growth in employment over period since 1999 that considerably exceeded that of the region. Darlington has been strikingly successful at creating new jobs over recent years. However, the 2006 study identified some issues for concern, notably:

¹³GVA per capita is a measure of the wealth of an area, particularly the value of what it produces.

- wage levels for those who work in Darlington are behind the regional average;
- there are some deprived neighbourhoods, arising from localised issues of low rates of economic activity and low skills.
- The Borough continues to have a comparatively low rate of start-up enterprise.

¹⁴Economic Statistics for the Boroughs in the Tees Valley, Tees Valley Unlimited, October 2009

2.2.6 More recent data¹⁴ shows that GVA per capita remains higher than for the Tees Valley and region as a whole, but is still below the national average. The latest data (2008) shows that wage levels (full time earnings) for those who work in Darlington has risen above sub regional and regional levels, but for residents of Darlington, wage levels remain amongst the lowest in the sub region, and below regional and national wage levels.

2.2.7 Notwithstanding relatively low wage levels, people in Darlington have a higher gross disposable household income than is prevalent across the Tees Valley and across the north east as a whole, as has been the case over at least the last 10 years. However pockets of deprivation still exist, e.g.

unemployment is 9.9% for Central (inner Darlington) ward (Sept 2009), compared with 1.7% in Heighington and Coniscliffe (rural) ward.

Future Prospects

2.2.8 The 2006 study³ estimated that, using the most credible scenario, Darlington would generate a headline growth rate of 330 jobs per annum to 2015, a rate which could be maintained to 2020. It found that future economic growth would depend on maintaining and enhancing Darlington's principal strengths - quality of life and accessibility – compared with other locations in the North East. The 2006 study envisaged the key employment growth sectors would be health, logistics, business and financial services, and engineering and civil engineering, with other growth sectors including creative industries and digital media, renewable energy (and recycling), chemicals, retail, and tourism and leisure, including food.

2.2.9 Like the rest of the country, Darlington's economy has suffered from the economic downturn, and a return to normal, let alone, strong conditions in the UK economy remains some way off. Much depends on the supply and demand for credit; it could take years both for banks' risk appetite to return and for firms and households to want to borrow more. This will affect how soon and to what extent investors will return to Darlington and help grow the local economy; any growth in investment in new facilities that there is may be tempered, as existing surplus capacity also absorbs growth.

2.3 The Key Challenges for Darlington and the Role of the Local Development Framework

2.3.1 The key spatial planning challenges that Darlington will face over the next 15 years or so arise from the sometimes competing pressures of accommodating the development that will be required to support continued economic growth and conserving the valued qualities of the built and natural environment that give the Borough its distinctiveness. Underpinning the location and form of all future development and regeneration activity will be the Borough's commitment to reducing the Borough's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and securing sustainable patterns and forms of development.

Links to One Darlington: Perfectly Placed

2.3.2 The sustainable community strategy, 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', published by Darlington Partnership in 2008, sets out the most significant issues and problems that must be addressed in Darlington and a vision for Darlington for the period 2008-2021. As it is the role of the LDF to give spatial expression to the sustainable community strategy, this LDF Core Strategy addresses many of the issues and problems it refers to.

2.3.3 The planning of the built environment will need to accommodate a projected increase in population and households, and anticipate the needs of an ageing population. The LDF will play a part in helping to tackle obesity by ensuring that new developments are designed and located to make it attractive for day to day journeys to be made on foot or by bike, and that the facilities and open spaces where exercise can take place are readily accessible and attractive to everyone.

2.3.4 The LDF will also play a part in efforts to reduce the current 13 year life expectancy gap between the wards with the shortest and longest lifespan.

This is achieved by identifying sites and safeguarding existing locations where employment, education and community facilities can be or are being provided, and by ensuring that there is sufficient decent, suitable and affordable accommodation for all those in need.

2.3.5 This Core Strategy also has a key role in supporting efforts to promote and improve Darlington town centre, its markets and independent retailers, as it includes policies that reinforce its role as the principal location in the Borough for shopping and other town centre uses.

2.3.6 The LDF will help to address the challenge of enhancing people’s perceptions of safety and tackling crime and antisocial behaviour by ensuring that ‘designing out crime’ considerations are integrated into the planning and design of all new developments, and that there are sufficient accessible facilities available for citizens of all ages to have fulfilling lives.

2.3.7 Through the identification of strategic locations for development and regeneration activity and the associated resources and infrastructure required to bring them forward, this Core Strategy provides the public commitment necessary to attract public and private sector funding to the Borough. It also provides the framework for securing contributions from developers towards the costs of physical, community and environmental infrastructure.

2.3.8 Those significant issues and problems, identified in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed that can be tackled through spatial planning, and this LDF Core Strategy in particular, are set out in Table 2.1. The key links between One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and the LDF Core Strategy are set out in Appendix 4.

Table 2.1: Significant Issues and Problems for Darlington to be Addressed through the Local Development Framework

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed Issue	Where it is dealt with in this Document
An ageing population	Vision Objectives 2, 4 and 8 Draft revised policies CS11 (Meeting Housing Needs) and CS19 (Improving the Transport Network and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network).
Tackling gaps in health and well being across the Borough, and reducing obesity.	Vision Objectives 2 and 6 Draft revised policies CS11 (Meeting Housing Needs), CS13 (Accommodating Travelling Groups), CS17(Green Infrastructure), CS18: Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities) and CS19 (Improving the Transport Network and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network).
Attracting economic investment into the Borough.	Vision Objectives 3 and 8 Draft revised policies CS1 (Darlington’s Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy), CS5 (Supporting the Local Economy) and CS19 (Improving the Transport Network and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network).
Promoting and Improving the Town Centre	Vision Objective 5 Draft revised policies CS7 (The Town Centre) and CS8 (Additional Retail Provision).
Securing Investment in major Infrastructure Projects.	Vision Objective 3 Draft revised policies CS1 (Darlington’s Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy), CS5 (Supporting the Local Economy)
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	Vision Objective 4 Draft revised policy CS11 (Meeting Housing Needs),
Tackling traffic congestion whilst enhancing	Vision Objectives 2, 3, 5 and 8 Draft revised policies CS1 (Darlington’s Sub Regional Role and

accessibility.	Locational Strategy), CS7 (The Town Centre) CS9 (District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services), CS10 (New Housing Development), CS17(Green Infrastructure), CS18: Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities) and CS19 (Improving the Transport Network and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network).
Reducing carbon dioxide emissions	Vision Objective 1 Draft revised policies CS1 (Darlington's Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy), CS3 (Promoting Renewable Energy), CS7 (The Town Centre) CS9 (District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services), CS10 (New Housing Development), CS17(Green Infrastructure), CS18 (Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities) and CS19 (Improving the Transport Network and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network).
Emphasising the Borough's positive qualities	Vision Objective 7 Draft revised policies CS2 (High Quality Design), CS14 (Local Character and Distinctiveness), CS7 (The Town Centre).

Links to Economic Regeneration Strategies

2.3.9 Economic regeneration strategy work at the sub regional and local level are also key inputs into the LDF. At the sub-regional level, the forward strategy of the City Region Business Case⁵ identifies some key priorities for improving economic competitiveness and building on economic strengths. Those that relate particularly to the spatial planning of Darlington are set out in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Economic Competitiveness Priorities for Darlington

Priority	LDF Core Strategy links
Regenerating the core of the urban area and developing underused and environmentally poor land	Objective 1 CS1
Improving the quality of life in the town centre.	Objective 5 CS7
Providing a modern competitive transport infrastructure which improves both internal and external connectivity.	Objective 8 CS19
Renewing an ageing housing stock which caters for the needs of the early part of the 20th Century rather than the needs of the 21st.	Objective 4 CS12
Reducing social polarisation by providing more opportunities for new housing in the town centre.	Objective 4 CS10
Improving liveability by improving the environment, cultural and retail facilities	Objectives 6 and 7 CS2, CS6, CS7, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS18, CS19.
Developing in the long term a viable private sector commercial property market without the need for public sector support	Objective 4 CS5
Making the most of economic opportunities arising from our transport connections to other city regions.	Objectives 4 and 8 CS5, CS19
Realising the economic potential of Durham Tees Valley Airport as an economic drive.	Objectives 4 and 8 CS5, CS19
Developing the Tees Valley as a logistics hub for the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber.	Objective 3 CS5
Doubling of the size of Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire.	Objective 4 CS10

¹⁵This is a refresh and refocusing of the Darlington Gateway Strategy, published in 2003. The 2003 strategy focussed on employment land and premises, underpinned by quality of life and accessibility. The 2006-2020 strategy is of broader scope, setting out economic regeneration priorities and key actions.

2.3.10 At the local level, the Darlington Gateway Strategy 2006-2020¹⁵ highlighted the economic benefits of:

- developing the town centre and its offer;
- building on a strong record of accommodating office development in key locations, including the town centre;
- developing key supporting infrastructure in the town;
- encouraging larger, modern industrial accommodation; and
- continuing to develop Faverdale as a strategic distribution and industrial location.

This was translated into a number of specific priorities and actions. Those with a spatial element where work is still underway to secure delivery, and which are reflected in this LDF Core Strategy are set out in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Priorities and Actions of the Darlington Gateway Strategy

Priorities and Actions	LDF Core Strategy links
Central Park.	draft revised policies CS1, CS5, CS6 and CS10
Commercial Street and Feethams/Beaumont Street.	both within the Town Centre area - see draft revised policies CS1, CS5, and CS7
Parkgate – Development of the Eastern Edge of Town Centre.	within the Town Centre Fringe - see draft revised policies CS1, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS10 and CS19
developing the employment land portfolio at Valley Street North, Borough Road, East of Town Centre/ Parkgate, McMullen Road West, Blacketts site and Faverdale.	draft revised policy CS5
Environmental improvements to St Cuthbert's Way	see draft revised policy CS19
Walk and cycle routes to town centre from Victoria Road, Valley Street North and Haughton Road	see draft revised policy CS19
A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway and Tees Valley Metro	see draft revised policy CS19
Tackling Congestion	see draft revised policy CS19

2.3.11 The 2006 Gateway Strategy was arrived at following an appraisal of three options¹⁶ for economic growth as follows:

¹⁶Sustainability Appraisal of the Darlington Gateway Strategy 2006, BDP

- Option 1 focused on a no change scenario, with no further policy initiatives proposed;
- Option 2 considered a level of intervention which would have medium impact on the economy. It focused on the refinement of land use allocations and the development of the town centre. This option placed renewed emphasis upon the quality of life offering.
- Option 3 focused on a scenario which would lead to a high impact for the economic future of the Borough. In addition to the approach of option 2, the third option proposes to allocate additional employment land and place no restrictions on the use of particular site allocations.

A fuller outline of the options considered appears at Appendix 5.

2.3.12 Each option had different impacts on key themes, such as employment growth, growth sectors, quantity of new land allocations required, quality of life, town centre, skills and connectivity. The sustainability appraisal of the options¹⁷ found Option 1 scored negatively, whilst Options 2 and 3 both scored positively, but had both positive and negative economic, social and environmental effects. Option 2 was found to be the most sustainable option.

2.3.13 The approach that was reflected in the final strategy was a combination of the most sustainable elements of each option¹⁷. These included:

- Enhancing the skills offer in Darlington through the promotion of further education initiatives within the borough;
- Reinforcing the quality of life offer;
- Expansion the town centre;
- Developing a strategy for drawing in workers from across the region;

- Enhancing regional links to employment sites and developing a strategy for enhanced connectivity between employment sites and the town centre;
- Encouraging higher value sectors into the borough;
- Introducing control over the use of particular sites; and
- Encouraging the development of brownfield land for key employment sites.

Tackling Climate Change

¹⁷Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (supplement to PPS1), DCI G, 2007

¹⁸Policy 3 of the RSS

¹⁹Greener Theme long term outcomes, See the SCS at www.darlington.gov.uk

2.3.14 As well as the economic imperative, the issue of climate change has continued to rise up the national and international agenda. The Climate Change Act 2008 set UK targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and tackling climate change is a key Government priority for the planning system¹⁷. Regionally, tackling the impacts of and adapting to climate change is a key challenge, and is the subject of a separate policy¹⁸. Locally, a key outcomes of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed are to reduce carbon emissions, manage the risks associated with climate change and make the most of new opportunities arising out of a changing climate¹⁹.

2.3.15 Preparation of this LDF Core Strategy provides a timely opportunity to ensure that climate change considerations are embedded in the future planning of the Borough. This Core Strategy tackles climate change issues in several ways:

- by locating new development in the most sustainable locations, having regard to accessibility to jobs, shops, schools and services by sustainable forms of travel, and minimising the use of greenfield land;
- by making the most of existing transport infrastructure and creating a more sustainable transport network to reduce transport emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases;
- by promoting the use of sustainable design and construction techniques;
- by identifying the opportunities for commercial scale renewable energy generation in the Borough;
- by setting targets for the percentage of energy use required by new developments that can be supplied from on site decentralised renewable and low carbon sources;
- by improving the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock;
- by ensuring that new development is not located in areas at risk from flooding; and
- by strengthening the green infrastructure network.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment

²⁰Darlington LDF Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report, December 2009.

²¹LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options, January 2008

2.3.16 Sustainability appraisal has been carried out at key stages in the preparation of this LDF Core Strategy, and full details can be found in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal report²⁰. The appraisal has taken place alongside policy development so that feedback from the appraisal process has shaped the preferred options included in this document. The sustainability appraisal framework has also been refreshed from that which was originally used to appraise the Issues and Options Report²¹, to reflect the new sustainability issues highlighted in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, which was published after the Issues and Options consultation was carried out.

Key Spatial Challenges

2.3.17 Arising out of consideration of all the above, the key spatial challenges facing the Borough over the next 15 years or so are:

- Where to provide the 429 hectares of new employment land that will be needed to deliver the range and type of jobs that the Borough needs to fulfil its economic aspirations.
- How to unlock the potential of well located areas of unused and underused land, such as in the town centre, at Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe for the benefit of the Borough as a whole.
- How to ensure that the town centre continues to fulfil its role as a sub regional centre for shopping and other town centre functions.
- Where to accommodate the 6000 new houses that are needed to meet identified needs in the Borough by 2026.
- How to ensure that best use is made of all existing housing, and that the housing stock is appropriate to 21st Century needs.
- How to ensure that new development and infrastructure provision take place so as to deliver the most sustainable form of development, and so as to ensure that the distinctiveness of Darlington and the quality of life enjoyed by its residents is maintained and enhanced.
- How to ensure that jobs, shops, schools and other community facilities and services are in the most accessible locations for all the Borough's residents, particularly for those travelling on foot, by bike or using public transport.
- How to ensure that the scale, nature and location of new development is such that the potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation is maximised, whilst local impacts on the environment and amenity are minimised.
- How to ensure that all the above takes place in a way that allows the retention and enhancement of Darlington's local distinctiveness, the Borough's intrinsic natural qualities, and the quality of life of the people who live here.

2.4 What Darlington will be like in the Year 2026

2.4.1 A draft vision and 14 related spatial objectives were set out in the Issues and Options report²¹. The vision sets out the kind of place we want Darlington to be in 2026, indicating the main features of the development pattern, the types and forms of development and land use change that will be required to get there. Strategic objectives provide the link between the overall vision and the draft policies; all the policies will help to deliver one or more of the spatial objectives, which themselves give expression to particular elements of the vision.

2.4.2 Since the Issues and Options report was prepared, Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' has been finalised, and has informed this revised draft vision and strategic objectives. As with 'One Darlington Perfectly Placed', there are two cross cutting objectives, whilst the theme specific objectives align as far as possible with the Core Strategy and 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' themes.

2.4.3 We have also taken account of the feedback we received on the draft vision and strategic objectives set out in the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options, published in October 2008, and comments received at Issues and

Options stage. Some key points made, that have been addressed in the revised vision and strategic objectives are:

- mention that sustainable transport infrastructure is key to achieving the vision;
- biodiversity is not just related to the countryside;
- refer to conserving the historic environment;
- highlight addressing health inequalities more in the vision;
- include the need to adapt to the effects of climate change;
- refer to the role of informal recreation in improving health;
- Use shorter, less diverse sentences
- support references to Darlington retaining its unique identity.
- make sure infrastructure can support more development.
- protect and enhance the character and integrity of villages; keep town and country distinctive.
- refer to sports facilities, landscape character and geological conservation.

2.4.4 Other comments made about the vision and objectives raised matters that are dealt with in draft policies.

The Revised Draft Vision and Strategic Objectives

2.4.5 The vision has been revised to take account of the views expressed and to align it with the vision in 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'. The key challenges and policy context outlined in this chapter have also informed the revised draft vision and objectives.

Proposed Vision: A Vision For Darlington

'By 2026 Darlington will be a more sustainable community, where a real step change has been achieved in enhancing the quality of life and local environment, and expanding local opportunities for work and for sustainable travel. Those who live in, work in or visit the Borough will enjoy the opportunities and vibrant life of an ambitious city, but within the fabric of a friendly, historic market town with a distinctive atmosphere and against the backcloth of surrounding attractive countryside and villages'

The Proposed Spatial Vision

Over the next 20 years or so, Darlington will continue to develop as the physical and economic gateway to the Tees Valley City Region and North East England. It will be a key location for doing business and enjoying a high quality of life, and will draw in companies that may not otherwise locate in the region. A wide range of high quality and accessible previously-developed and greenfield sites, within and on the edge of the compact urban area, will attract employers and local enterprises that are keen to tap into a highly skilled workforce. A rolling programme to bring forward strategic mixed-use sites like Central Park with public sector support will form the cornerstone of the employment land supply. The principal growth sectors are expected to be financial and business services, health, civil engineering and construction-related businesses, logistics, retail, leisure and tourism. The result will be sustainable economic growth, more employment and higher paid jobs.

Darlington will also continue to be an important and distinctive location in the retail, tourism and cultural landscapes of the North East and Tees Valley. Appropriate development within the town centre and its fringes will ensure that that Darlington continues to thrive as an established historic and friendly market town. The special character of the town will remain evident through its abundant open spaces and environmental resources, complemented by the locally distinctive, safe and sustainable design of new developments. The location and design of new land uses and developments will have enhanced local neighbourhoods and helped to reduce previous disparities in environmental quality, economic, social and recreational opportunities. It will also have underpinned efforts to reduce the Borough's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate the effects of climate change, and to improve accessibility around the Borough for all.

A growing population will have been accommodated in new housing constructed making use, as far as possible, of underused land and buildings within the existing urban area. There will be a good supply and mix of market and affordable housing, suitable for all stages of life, meeting the needs and aspirations of local people and those choosing to locate to Darlington. This housing will be at the heart of high quality, healthy, safe, environmentally friendly and green neighbourhoods, providing attractive alternatives to the Borough's southern and western rural hinterlands as places to live. Residents will benefit from easy access to good quality sport and leisure facilities, and modern education facilities for children and adults alike. Darlington's university town status will underpin opportunities for learning and skills development for everyone, whatever their aspirations.

It will be possible to make comfortable, safe, convenient and affordable trips throughout the Borough by sustainable transport modes. Fewer people will make unnecessary journeys by private car and higher levels of cycling and walking will be reflected in a better and healthier quality of life for many.

The rural character of the countryside will be protected and the open aspect to the south of the town will be maintained, providing views to the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. Elsewhere, a more mature and expanded Tees Forest and an improved rights of way network will provide a softer environment and accessible recreation opportunities at the urban fringe. Small-scale developments will have helped to sustain the vibrancy and individual character and appearance of the Borough's villages and hamlets, whilst the network of both urban and rural biodiversity and geodiversity resources will reflect a continued and ongoing regime of protection and enhancement.

People will recommend Darlington as a place to live and work in because of its high quality, comfortable, healthy, safe and sustainable living and working environments, and because of its educational provision and opportunities for stimulating and rewarding work. The Borough's

accessibility and exceptional retail, cultural and leisure facilities will also be cited as reasons to visit, and residents will be able to boast about the Borough's record and recognised credentials as the place where sustainable development happens.

The Proposed Strategic Objectives

Cross Cutting

1. Minimise the impact of, and adapt to the effects of climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the use of resources and the risk of flooding and pollution, and by maximising the re-use and recycling of land, buildings and waste through more sustainable designs, patterns of development and means of movement.
2. Provide equality of opportunity for everyone now and in the future, by ensuring that the design, location and mix of development across the Borough maintains and creates safe, attractive, accessible, healthy and inclusive sustainable communities, eliminating any disadvantage people experience.

Theme Specific

3. Facilitate sustainable economic growth by protecting and promoting a range and continuous supply of employment development opportunities in sustainable locations that meet the needs of local businesses and continue to attract high quality, well paid jobs to the Borough.
4. Provide a continuous supply of land for new housing developments and help improve and reuse the existing stock so that it can better match the aspirations of those that wish to live and work in the Borough, whilst doing more to meet the housing needs of an ageing population and those unable to afford suitable accommodation on the open market.
5. Safeguard the function of Darlington town centre and capitalise on its shopping, culture, leisure, tourism and employment opportunities so that it continues to develop as a vibrant, attractive, safe, friendly and comfortable historic market town centre.
6. Safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of educational, social, sporting, health, recreational and cultural facilities, as well as natural and historic environments, so as to contribute to the happiness, fulfilment, health and well-being of people who live and work in the Borough, including children and young people.
7. Preserve the scale of, and strengthen the unique character, function and sense of place of Darlington's neighbourhoods, villages, landscapes, green infrastructure, heritage, habitats and countryside to contribute positively to its distinctiveness.
8. Support initiatives to maintain, expand and enhance facilities and networks for public transport, walking and cycling, so that the connections are in place to enable everyone to get around the Borough easily and affordably, whilst making the most of Darlington's existing transport infrastructure, tackling congestion and improving links to the rest of Tees Valley and further afield.

SECTION 3: ACHIEVING A MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

3.0 Introduction

3.0.1 A sustainable Darlington will be a place where people want to live, work and visit, both now and in the future. It will have a strong economy and will be a place where the evolving needs and aspirations of residents and those working in the Borough will be met in environmentally sustainable ways. Darlington's carbon footprint will be reduced and land will be used more efficiently, whilst achieving and maintaining a high quality of life for all and reducing inequalities across the Borough.

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed – a Vision for Darlington 2008-2021, is the sustainable community strategy, Darlington Partnership, 2008.

3.0.2 This section sets out the key spatial planning policies that are at the heart of delivering the spatial vision for Darlington and the priorities that are set out in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed¹. The policies outline where new development will take place, how it should be designed, how the infrastructure that is needed to support new development will be delivered and how new development in the Borough will contribute towards minimising and reducing overall carbon emissions.

3.1 Darlington's Sub-regional Role and Locational Strategy

Context

3.1.1 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' recognises that Darlington's location, accessibility and attractive environment make it perfectly placed within North East England and Tees Valley to attract investment and economic activity that might not otherwise come to the region or sub-region. It is identified as a main settlement in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)², an important location for employment development, a sub regional centre in terms of retail and leisure use, and a strategic public transport hub. One North East³ also recognises Darlington as a key centre within the Tees Valley City Region, with the potential to contribute significantly to accelerated growth in the regional economy across a range of sectors.

²The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, GONE July 2008

³The regional development agency.

⁴Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009.

3.1.2 Darlington lies at the 'gateway' to the Tees Valley City Region and the wider North East, and has excellent national and international transport links, by rail (East Coast Main Line), road (A1/M) and air (Durham Tees Valley Airport). The town centre provides employment, shops and services for large parts of North Yorkshire and south and west Durham and the western part of the Tees Valley, and is the fifth largest shopping centre in North East England. The Borough also helps to meet some of the housing needs arising out of continued expansion at Catterick Garrison, and is part of a wider housing market area for higher income people living and working in the Tees Valley⁴.

The Issues

⁵mid 2008 estimate. ONS

⁶ONS 2006 based projections

⁷DCLG statistics

⁸Detail is provided in Section 6 of this Core Strategy .

1. How much new development to plan for ?

3.1.3 Darlington's current population is 100,500⁵ and is forecast to grow to 109,300 by 2021⁶, and by some 10% by 2026. Coupled with this, the number of households is also expected to increase from 46,000 in 2011 to 50,000 by 2021⁷. This Core Strategy plans for population increase and household growth and reflects the need to diversify the existing dwellings stock. The levels of new housing development proposed reflect the housing requirement for Darlington set out in the RSS⁸.

⁹Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement, 2008

¹⁰ GVA: gross value added, a measure of the wealth of an area.

¹¹RSS para. 2.183 and Policy 10.

¹² Darlington Gateway Strategy, prepared by consultants BDP for Darlington Council 2006.

¹³ Town Centre Fringe Area Action Plan – see Local Development Scheme at www.darlington.gov.uk for more details.

¹⁴Tees Valley Unlimited Single Programme Delivery Plan.

¹⁵Feethams Planning & Development Brief 2008 www.darlington.gov.uk

¹⁶Darlington Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009

¹⁷ RSS Policy 20

¹⁸RSS para. 2.183

3.1.4 The Borough's recent economic growth is also forecast to continue; the Tees Valley MAA⁹ specifically identifies Darlington as contributing towards increasing the sub-regional GVA¹⁰ from 80% to 86% of UK average by 2018. This Core Strategy plans for economic growth of at least 2.5% per annum, which is the working assumption on which the RSS is based.

2. Where to accommodate the development associated with economic and population growth ?

3.1.5 New land will be required for the employment, services, infrastructure and new housing associated with population and economic growth. The RSS sets out an approach that gives priority to the use of previously developed land and buildings (PDL) in accessible and sustainable locations, and then to other land within urban areas that is not protected for nature or heritage conservation or recreational purposes.

3.1.6 The RSS¹¹ identifies Central Park in Darlington for a major mixed use regeneration project, and a planning permission is in place for a mix of housing, offices, a new park and a hotel. In 2006, it was suggested¹² that linked mixed-use development in and around the northern and eastern fringes of the town centre (known as the Town Centre Fringe) should also be promoted. The RSS reflects that work, with a reference to the employment potential next to Darlington Station (within the same general area). The wider Town Centre Fringe also has other discrete PDL opportunities, and the potential of the area as a whole to make a bigger contribution to the economy and quality of life of Darlington has been recognised by the Council. The intention is to take advantage of the area's good levels of accessibility, from outside as well as inside the Borough, and to help link the railway station and the Central Park regeneration area with the existing town centre through the Town Centre Fringe. Efforts to realise the area's potential, principally for new employment and housing will be co-ordinated through the preparation of an Area Action Plan¹³ and other appropriate planning framework documents. To ensure that a strong, cohesive, regenerated town continues to develop, there is already an existing commitment at the sub regional level¹⁴ to fund preparatory work in this area.

3.1.7 The town centre is expected to be able to accommodate the additional retailing needs associated with a sub regional centre for much of the plan period, e.g. through retail/leisure development in the Commercial Street area, and as the primary retail centre in the Borough, it will be safeguarded and enhanced so that it can continue to fulfil that role. Further development of town centre uses, particularly significant new office space, is also being planned in the Beaumont Street/Feethams area of the town centre¹⁵.

3.1.8 A range of smaller sites within the urban area are expected to come forward for development and redevelopment throughout the plan period, as social and economic space and place requirements evolve, e.g. the SHLAA¹⁶ identifies sites that may be suitable for housing, and there are significant commitments to new housing developments in the form of planning permissions, such as for 1200 new houses at Lingfield Point. However these, together with the broad locations identified above, will not be sufficient to accommodate all the new development that is envisaged, and so broad locations around the urban fringe have had to be considered.

3.1.9 The RSS¹⁷ identifies that investment to accelerate regional economic growth should be focussed on about 120ha of land at Faverdale, to realise its potential for distribution and logistics businesses, whilst sites near the A66 and the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor are also identified as major employment locations, particularly for offices and logistics¹⁸.

¹⁹RSS Policy 21

3.1.10 The Borough also contains part of Durham Tees Valley Airport, whose continued key role in the economic growth of the region and as a regional gateway is acknowledged¹⁹. The airport's owners have prepared plans for future growth up to the year 2030, and a planning permission is in place for airport related employment development there.

²⁰Housing Growth Point status commits the Tees Valley to additional new housebuilding.

3.1.11 Turning to housing, the town centre fringe, Central Park, and other existing planning permissions and sites identified in the SHLAA within the urban area are only expected to be able to deliver about 70% of all the new housing needed in the Borough by 2026. Urban sites are being targeted for public sector interventions to accelerate housing delivery, made possible by the award of Housing Growth Point²⁰ status to the Tees Valley.

²¹PPS3: Housing and RSS Policy 4.

3.1.12 In accordance with the approach to selecting new housing locations set out in national planning policy and the RSS²¹, a range of locations around the urban fringe have been considered for accommodating new housing development. The North West Urban Fringe and the Eastern Urban Fringe have been identified as the two further broad locations for accommodating the new housing required that cannot be accommodated within the existing urban area. More detail on employment land provision is set out in Policy CS5, and on new housing provision in Policy CS10.

²²Secondary settlements are smaller settlements where there is a significant development opportunity on previously developed land and buildings.

3.1.13 The Borough's villages and countryside are considered an integral part of what makes Darlington an attractive place to live, and their vitality and viability need to be safeguarded and strengthened, whether it be by retaining services or supporting new development, such as affordable housing, that help to maintain sustainable communities. None of the villages are considered to fit the RSS definition of 'secondary settlements'²², and so have not been identified as strategic locations for new development. However, the larger villages of Hurworth/Hurworth Place, Middleton St. George and Heighington should be the focus for the provision of services, employment and facilities to sustain the rural community.

²³See the Council's Local Development Scheme for the timetable for preparing the Accommodating Growth DPD.

3.1.14 Limits to development will be drawn around each settlement to identify the area within which any new development will be expected to be accommodated. The limits to development will be identified in the forthcoming Accommodating Growth DPD²³.

Options Considered

²⁴See Issues 1, 2 and 7, Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, Jan 08

3.1.14 Three options were proposed²⁴ regarding Darlington's strategic role, ranging from being a sub-regional centre within the Tees Valley to being a key centre within the Tees Valley City Region, with associated higher levels of development. Related to this were options²⁴ for the amount of growth to be accommodated, ranging from accommodating population change only, accommodating increased population and economic growth and constraining development growth.

3.1.15 As to where growth should go, four options²⁴ were considered, ranging from sustainable PDL locations within the urban area through to sustainable locations within and adjoining the urban area, service villages and main villages.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

3.1.16 Some of the points raised during consultations included that Darlington should not try to compete with or be like the rest of Teesside, but

should focus on its distinctive market town character and green spaces, and its attractive countryside and villages. Areas of new development should be linked to new services and infrastructure, and there should be a choice of development sites and locations to attract new investment, whilst the airport should be acknowledged as a key gateway and driver of economic growth. There was both support for and opposition to a range of strategic locations identified in the Preferred Options document, and a request for the hierarchy of villages to be identified. In the context of the economic downturn, several respondents asked if the population growth and economic forecasts were realistic.

²⁵e.g. Darlington SHLAA 2009, Retail Study 2008 and Employment Land Review 2009 – see www.darlington.gov.uk.

3.1.17 Publication of the RSS in July 2008 provided a clear steer on the regional role of Darlington, and the amount of new development that the Borough is expected to accommodate to meet the regional aspiration of at least 2.5% economic growth per annum. More recent information²⁵ collected quantified the amount of new development that is needed that cannot already be met by existing commitments, such as planning permissions granted but not yet implemented.

²⁶see Appendix XX of the Darlington LDF Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Draft Final Report, DBC 2009.

3.1.18 The sustainability appraisal (SA) carried out on the initial options²⁶ found that accommodating economic and population growth performed well, though reflecting RSS greenfield sites like Faverdale had a negative environmental impact. The SA also highlighted the importance of mitigating the environmental impact of further growth.

3.1.19 During policy development, more detailed options for accommodating growth, particularly new housing have emerged. The SA carried out on these options found accommodating growth within the urban area, particularly the Town Centre Fringe, was the most sustainable option, and that where new development was needed beyond this, new housing in the North West Urban Fringe and North East Urban Fringe would be the most sustainable, provided appropriate community infrastructure and sustainable transport provision could be made, and that the adverse impacts, particularly arising from more traffic could be mitigated.

3.1.20 Account has also been taken of where there are significant unimplemented or only partially implemented planning permissions, e.g. Commercial Street (retail/leisure) and the Feethams (offices) areas of the town centre, Central Park and Lingfield Point (both mixed use), West Park (housing) and north of Morton Palms (employment), and the continuing contribution that will be made to meeting overall development needs by areas of land within established employment areas.

3.1.21 The Council's revised preferred option is therefore a draft policy that plans for growth in accordance with the RSS. Whilst acknowledging current economic circumstances, it is not expected that these will prevail much beyond the initial years of the plan period. As housebuilding has been one of the sectors most affected by the downturn, the draft policy assumes that work underway to 'unlock' stalled housing sites will help to achieve the RSS requirement in the period to 2017, rather than being over and above it.

3.1.22 This draft policy most closely reflects Options 1C (Key centre within the Tees Valley City Region), 2B (accommodating increased population and economic growth) and 7C (sustainable locations within and adjoining the Urban Area) previously presented²⁷. More detail on how the strategic locations for new housing were selected is given in Section 6 of this document.

²⁷See Issue 1, Issues and Options Report, Jan 08

Revised Draft Policy CS1: Darlington's Sub-regional Role and Locational Strategy

Growth, development and enhanced infrastructure provision will be encouraged in Darlington Borough where it helps to fulfil:

- (i) its historic role as a market town and host to a thriving and modern town centre, whilst providing an attractive residential environment serving the Borough and its hinterland; and
- (ii) its role as a sub-regional centre and key location in the Tees Valley City Region, or
- (iii) its role as a gateway to the region and sub region, serving the eastern part of the Tees Valley, and large parts of North Yorkshire and south and west Durham.

New development and regeneration activity in the Borough will be concentrated on sustainable locations within and adjoining the main urban area, where there is actual or potential good accessibility for everybody. Priority will be given to delivery in the following strategic locations:

- (a) the Town Centre, for retailing and other town centre uses;
- (b) Town Centre Fringe, for mixed use development, principally housing and employment;
- (c) Central Park, for mixed use development, principally housing and employment;
- (d) North West Urban Fringe, for new housing, tourism and employment development;
- (e) Eastern Urban Fringe, for new employment and housing development;
- (f) Durham Tees Valley Airport area, for airport related employment uses

Development in the strategic locations (a) to (f) above will be expected to contribute **XX%** of the overall development needs of Darlington Borough.

Within the limits to development of the Borough's villages, development that supports the vitality and viability of the village, its services or the rural economy will be supported, particularly in the larger villages of Hurworth/Hurworth Place, Middleton St. George and Heighington.

Outside the limits to development of the main urban area and the villages, development will be limited to that required to meet identified rural needs.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe Action Area Plan Core Strategy Policies CS5, 7 and 10.	Development Control decisions
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Means of Delivery
DBC Private sector	Allocation of land for new development Investment decisions, e.g. of Peel Holdings at Durham Tees Valley Airport, of Marchday at Lingfield Point.
DBC/Fabrick/Keepmoat/ Yuill	Using HCA/ONE/Housing Growth Point funding to bring forward Central Park, surplus school sites, housing sites, sites for development in the town centre and the

	Town Centre Fringe.
Monitoring Indicators	
New	Amount of new development that has planning permission and has been completed in the strategic locations identified.
New	Amount of all new employment and housing development that has been completed in the strategic locations identified, as a percentage of all new housing and employment development completed in the Borough.

3.2 ACHIEVING HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Context

3.2.1 Darlington's built and natural townscapes and landscapes, and its many buildings and settings of character create a distinctive environment that makes Darlington different to other towns and cities.

3.2.2 High quality design of new development at every scale should reflect the positive, distinctive characteristics of its location, adding value to the built and natural environment to create a vibrant 'sense of place'. This will make the area more attractive to investors and visitors, and provide a high quality of life for the community, now and in the future. It can also help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.2.3 Design should also connect the old with the new, be safe, with functional spaces that provide for wildlife and people, and improve poor quality environments. Contemporary design should complement the past but be honest to its time.

Issues

What level of sustainable building standards should be provided in new development?

3.2.4 High quality, sustainable design together with the efficient operation of development can dramatically cut energy use and consumption, helping to reduce CO₂ emissions, a major cause of climate change. Designs should plan for the lifetime of a development, recognising the benefits sustainability can have for the climate and the community, now and in the long term¹.

3.2.5 Sustainable building standards² must be met. New designs are expected to achieve high standards of energy and water efficiency, minimise flood risk and incorporate appropriate surface water drainage techniques, such as SUDS, waste minimisation facilities and biodiversity features to gain the appropriate Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and BREEAM standard.

How can high quality, distinctive design be promoted in new development?

3.2.6 Local character and distinctiveness is visible across Darlington's different neighbourhoods and villages⁴. The Borough has 7 distinct character zones (see figure 2.1), each reflecting the positive interactions of many different characteristics like distinctive townscape, patterns of development and approaches to detailing. High quality design should, according to location, appropriately reflect the principles identified in the Darlington Characterisation Study to help reinforce local character and distinctiveness and to help positively regenerate neighbourhoods and villages.

¹Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, Darlington Partnership 2006

²Code for Sustainable Homes, DCLG, 2008
www.breeam.org

³SUDS = sustainable urban drainage systems

⁴Darlington Characterisation Study, DBC, 2009

Figure 2.1: Character Zones Across Darlington

Insert Darlington Zone Map here

How should accessibility for all be provided?

3.2.7 High quality design should create a permeable movement network with easy and safe movement for everyone, with priority given to pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport, whilst ensuring that those who need to use a car to move around are able to do so. Direct routes and connections through and from new development to bus stops, local shops and services like schools, health centres and sport and recreation facilities will help to reduce the gaps in deprivation, health and educational attainment across the Borough. They will also ensure that new development is integrated well with existing communities and the wider landscape.

3.2.8 Where parking is required as part of new development, this will be made in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Tees Valley Highway Design Guide 2009 or any successor document.

The Options Considered

⁵See Options 3 and 5 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

3.2.9 A range of options⁵ were considered to secure high quality, sustainable, inclusive and safe design in new development:

- (a) Minimum sustainable building standards and reduction of use of the car
- (b) CSH 3-6 rating and BREEAM excellent rating, the promotion of sustainable transport and reduction of use of car
- (c) carbon neutral development and transport.

⁶Issue 5, of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

3.2.10 Options were also presented on the types of sites where high quality, safe design would be sought⁶ The options considered also highlighted the range of matters that a draft policy on design could include, such as (d) promoting community safety through 'Secured by Design'⁷, (e) local distinctiveness, (f) mixed use development, (g) promoting development in sustainable locations and (h) the incorporation of travel plans and sustainable transport use.

⁷Secured by Design is a UK Police Flagship Initiative focussing on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

3.2.11 Sustainability appraisal found options (b) and a combination of options (d) - (h) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the potential adverse impacts that incorporating secured by design and sustainable building standards may have on the affordability of homes, which can be mitigated through other policies in this document and subsequent DPDs and SPDs.

3.2.12 Comments made during the development of draft policies have highlighted the need to ensure that only positive features should be reflected in distinctive design, the appropriate level of sustainable building standards needs to be established and inclusive design should be promoted through Design, Access and Sustainability Statements.

⁸Design of New Development SPD, DBC, July 2009 – this will be reissued when this Core Strategy is adopted, so that it can remain as part of the LDF.

3.2.13 The Council has adopted a Design of New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)⁸ which provides more detail about the design of new development, including all public and private spaces.

3.2.14 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is Option (b) combined with options (d) - (h) and takes account of the new requirements set out in the Planning Act 2008, the Design SPD and the Darlington Characterisation Study and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS2.

Revised Draft Policy CS2: Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design

Good quality, safe, sustainable and inclusive design will be promoted in all new developments. All development proposals should:

- a) make efficient use of land, existing buildings and resources;
- b) reflect and/or enhance Darlington's distinctive natural and built characteristics that positively contribute to the character of the local area and its sense of place;
- c) create a safe and secure environment that will incorporate the principles of Secured by Design;
- d) support inclusive communities, by providing links to existing networks to ensure safe, convenient and attractive access for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and for disabled people;
- e) easily connect to key social and community facilities and incorporate appropriate utilities provision, promoting sustainable neighbourhoods;
- f) incorporate measures to reduce carbon emissions, promote energy management and adapt to climate change through the use of sustainable design and construction techniques to meet the appropriate level of the national sustainable building standards:
 - Residential development 2010-2016
 - 1. 2010: Code for Sustainable Homes rating 3
 - 2. 2013: Code for Sustainable Homes rating 4
 - 3. 2016: Code for Sustainable Homes rating 6
 - Non residential development
 - 4. 2010-2016: BREEAM 2008 standards 'very good-outstanding'
- g) create safe, attractive, functional and integrated outdoor spaces that complement the built form, relate well to the Borough's green infrastructure network, promote biodiversity and geological interests and incorporate public art; and
- h) provide vehicular access and parking suitable for its use and location reflecting appropriate maximum parking standards set out in the Tees Valley Highway Design Guide.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Design of New Development SPD Affordable Housing SPD Planning Obligations SPD Open Space Strategy Darlington Characterisation Study	Development Control decisions Building control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Design Codes Development briefs/masterplans Conservation Area Character Appraisals Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Darlington Tree Strategy Tees Valley Highways Design Guide Local Transport Plan
Delivery Organisation	Key Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or improve existing open space, children's play and priority habitats, sustainable

DBC DBC/developers/housebuilders DBC DBC	transport and transport infrastructure improvements Capital Programme Allocation of land for new development LTP2 and LTP3 funding to secure transport infrastructure measures Bidding for Single Programme/ HCA funding to support the strategic masterplanning of the Town Centre Fringe
Monitoring Indicators	
NI107	Perceptions of anti social behaviour
NI175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
NI186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area
NI188	Adapting to climate change
Core H3	Completed new or converted dwellings on PDL
Core H6	Housing Quality: BFL assessments
Local 20	Number of applications that meet CSH/BREEAM standards
New	Amount of completed non residential development complying with parking standards

3.3 PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY

Context

3.3.1 Climate change is the most significant issue affecting global society in the 21st Century. A main cause is human activity, particularly global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from fossil fuel energy use for travel, heat and electricity. National targets have been set to achieve a 20% cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010, with an 80% cut by 2050.

3.3.2 A recent study¹ found that in 2007, Darlington's domestic, commercial and industrial sectors total electricity demand was 492 GWh per year and heating demand was 1,156 GWh. The proposed levels of housing and employment growth are expected to result in an increase in electricity demand of at least 10% and in heat demand of at least 13% by 2026, unless measures are taken to mitigate demand.

3.3.3 Increasing energy use is a key issue in the North East²; the aim regionally is to achieve 10% of electricity consumption from renewable sources³ by 2010, rising to 20% by 2020. This equates to a target of 138MW minimum installed capacity in the Tees Valley.

3.3.4 Renewable energy³ will be an important contributor to reducing the Borough's demand for energy from fossil fuels. The only current installed capacity is at Stressholme waste water treatment works¹, where there is a 340 kW biogas generator. Scope exists to significantly increase this potential from a range of suitable types of technologies, in appropriate locations, at different scales. These range from commercial scale renewable energy, such as wind power and biomass, through on-site provision in new development, like a combined heat and plant (CHP) to micro-generation, like domestic solar panels.

Issues

How to generate renewable energy commercially in the Borough?

3.3.5 Significant potential exists for onshore wind in the Tees Valley; the Regional Spatial Strategy² (RSS) identifies the north eastern part of the Borough as part of an area of least constraint. Based on potential visual and landscape impact alone, this area has the potential for more than one development of approximately 4-6 medium to small-scale turbines⁴ (Figure

¹Darlington Renewable and Low Carbon Study, Entec, 2009

²Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008

³Renewable energy sources include wind, biomass, combined heat and power, district heating, solar, ground source and air source heat pumps.

⁴East Durham Limestone and Tees Plain Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Study - Addendum, ARUP, 2009

4.1). Wind generation schemes are being proposed for this part of the Borough; if approved up to 38MW installed capacity could be delivered.

Fig 4.1

⁵Darlington Renewable and Low Carbon Study, Entec, 2009

3.3.6 Based on an assessment of wind speeds, planning and environmental constraints, there is potential for wind generation in other parts of the Borough. The Renewable and Low Carbon Study⁵ has identified three additional potential areas of least constraint in the north east, north west and south east of the Borough (see Figure 4.2), potentially generating over 100MW installed capacity.

Fig 4.2

⁶ Medium scale turbine: potential to generate between 600Kw – 1.3MW installed capacity

3.3.7 Darlington's urban fringe, including future employment areas, could also potentially accommodate medium scale turbines⁶. Three potential areas of search have been identified on the Borough's western, eastern and southern fringes, potentially generating between 8-16MW installed capacity.

3.3.8 Wind energy alone will not be enough to significantly reduce the Borough's consumption of fossil fuels. There is great potential for biomass to provide reliable renewable heat and power in Darlington, typically from wood chips or pellets. Heat recovered from combustion can be used directly for heating, for generating electricity, or both, in a combined heat and power plant. Significant opportunities for biomass exist if district heating networks can be developed to supply space heating and hot water to a range of developments.

⁷See Policy CS1

3.3.9 District heating is most effective where there is high energy use. Darlington's heat density map (Figure 4.3) shows that the greatest demand for heat is in areas like the town centre, Darlington Memorial Hospital and education facilities. In the long term, the Borough's strategic development locations⁷, such as the Town Centre Fringe, provide opportunities to sustainably generate electricity and heat through district heating.

Fig 4.3

⁸PPS22, ODPM, 2004

3.3.10 In considering commercial energy generation schemes, Government guidance⁸ requires significant weight to be given to the wider environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy generation as well as to the potential impacts on amenity of neighbouring residents. This indicates that renewable energy developments should be supported, with impacts mitigated through appropriate design, with detailed assessments considering a range of factors specific to the locality, like potential impacts upon biodiversity, natural and built landscapes and townscapes.

3.3.11 Specifically for wind energy, the potential cumulative impact of developments within the Borough, together with others in neighbouring County Durham, will be considered. The impact on neighbouring residents will vary, depending on the size and scale of the turbine, its location and any cumulative impact. The minimum appropriate distance between turbines and residential properties in the Borough will be assessed on a site specific basis reflecting the impact on the locality. Impact upon aircraft and radar like at Durham Tees Valley Airport will also be considered.

What standards to set for on site decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy in the Borough?

3.3.12 On or near-site generation from renewable and low carbon energy is an important way of reducing the Borough's carbon dioxide emissions, providing a secure energy supply to a development and helping to provide a more affordable energy supply as fuel prices rise. It would complement energy efficiency improvements secured through Policy CS2 to reduce overall fossil fuel energy consumption.

⁹Regional Spatial Strategy, GONE, 2008

3.3.13 In Darlington, all major developments will be required to generate at least 10% of their energy supply from on site decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources⁹. By 2016, all new residential development is required to be carbon neutral⁹; a significant amount of on site provision will be required to achieve this sustainable standard. Without specific measures, development in the strategic locations (see Policy CS1), are likely to add significantly to the Borough's overall energy demand. As these are phased for delivery from 2016 and are relatively large scale, their development is anticipated to be able to integrate significant technological improvements to generate at least 20% of their energy supply from on site provision.

3.3.14 A flexible approach to provision will be required. The most appropriate technology or combination of technologies will be supported, reflecting the type, scale and nature of the development. Site constraints or abnormal development costs may mean that achieving these targets is not always feasible or viable on site; in these instances, appropriate connection to an existing or new combined heat and power plant or combined cooling, heat and power distribution network will be supported. Only where this is not possible will a contribution be sought to a carbon management fund, to enable off site renewable energy or energy efficiency improvements to Darlington's existing dwellings, helping to reduce the Borough's overall energy demand.

3.3.15 A key, complementary way of reducing the Borough's energy demand is micro-generation; solar photovoltaics, solar thermal, ground source heat pumps and individual biomass boilers all have the potential to supply homes. They will all be encouraged as part of the comprehensive development of strategic locations and as part of individual developments.

The Options Considered

3.3.16 Three options, developed as part of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study, were considered to promote renewable energy in the Borough:

- a) Combining commercial scale renewable energy, on site provision and establishment of an off site carbon reduction scheme
- b) All major developments, including conversions, to provide at least 10% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, including micro-renewables
- c) All major developments to provide at least 10% and all strategic locations to provide at least 20% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, including micro-renewables.

¹⁰Issues 6(a) to (l), LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report 2008.

3.3.17 These options replace the ones originally set out in the Issues and Options Report¹⁰

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

3.3.18 Sustainability appraisal found options (a) and (c) to be the most sustainable. Comments made during the development of draft policies asked

¹¹Distance between wind turbine and nearest residential properties.

for more detail on appropriate locations for renewable energy, for the details of studies to be taken into account and for more evidence to be collected on the feasibility for all forms of renewable energy across the Borough, and not just wind energy, and for more detail to be provided on 'stand off'¹¹ distances was required.

3.3.19 The Renewable and Low Carbon Study highlights the potential feasibility for a range of decentralised and renewable or low carbon technologies across the Borough. The addendum to the East Durham Limestone and Tees Plain Wind Farm Development and Landscape Capacity Study sets out visual and landscape impact guidance for wind energy in the north eastern part of the Borough.

3.3.20 Taking account of the matters outlined above, and the new issues raised by the two studies, the Council's revised preferred option is a combination of Options (a) and (c) and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS3.

Revised Draft Policy CS3: Promoting Renewable Energy

The development of renewable energy schemes will be supported and considered in the context of sustainable development and climate change, taking account of the wider environmental, social and economic impacts, both individual and cumulative, upon:

- a) residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour; and
- b) the operation of air traffic and radar systems.

Significant adverse impacts should be mitigated prior to development.

Potential locations for commercial scale renewable energy developments have been identified, though not to the exclusion of other sustainable locations or technologies, in:

1. The North-east, North-west and South-east areas of the Borough for wind energy;
2. The town centre and Town Centre Fringe for biomass/combined heat and power installations; and
3. The town centre and Town Centre Fringe to support a district heating and cooling network.

To reduce the impact of new development on the Borough's energy demand, on site provision of decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources of energy, including micro-renewables will be required, unless it can be shown that it is not feasible or viable, to achieve the following standards:

- (i) Strategic locations: at least 20% of their energy supply;
- (ii) Major developments (including conversions) of 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² non residential floorspace: at least 10% of their energy supply.

Where specific opportunities exist, development will be required to connect to existing biomass or combined heat and power installations or district heating schemes. Shared energy schemes within major or significant developments, new or existing will be supported.

Where it can be demonstrated that the required provision of on site decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources of energy supply cannot be met, a contribution to a carbon management fund will be required, to be invested in off site renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in the Borough.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Design of New Development SPD Planning Obligations SPD	Development Control decisions Building control decisions Development briefs/masterplans Design, Access and Sustainability Statements
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC DBC DBC/developers/ housebuilders Renewable energy providers	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or provide connections to renewable and low carbon technologies Capital Programme Allocation of land through new development and through on site provision Provision of commercial scale renewable energy
Monitoring Indicators	
NI186 NI188 Core E3 Local 21	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area Adapting to climate change Renewable energy capacity by type Low carbon energy generation

3.4 TIMELY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

Context

3.4.1 Darlington's future sustainable growth and development depends on the timely funding and delivery of supporting infrastructure that reflects the scale and type of development and the needs in the locality. Without appropriate infrastructure, essential new development may be held up and/or there could be unacceptable adverse social, economic or environmental impacts; also, the sustainable community strategy¹ vision, which seeks to balance economic growth with maintaining and enhancing the valued characteristics of Darlington's environment and its important services, will not be achieved. Requirements can include physical infrastructure like transport and utilities provision, community and social infrastructure like education facilities, health services and affordable housing, and green infrastructure like open space and habitat provision.

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008, the sustainable community strategy (SCS) for Darlington.

3.4.2 New infrastructure will be particularly important in bringing forward new development in the strategic locations identified in CS1. It should reflect the emerging demands of the new community or operational uses, but as importantly, should safeguard against adverse impacts on Darlington's existing infrastructure. This will help reduce social and health inequalities and contribute to a high quality of life for all the Borough's communities.

²Darlington Local Area Agreement, Darlington Partnership, 2008, is the three year delivery plan of the SCS.

3.4.3 The Darlington Local Area Agreement², focuses on how key areas of public sector investment and infrastructure delivery will make a difference on the ground, according to thematic priorities. Some funding for regeneration, economic development, housing and transport will be resourced from the national level, but managed at a sub regional level. The Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement (MAA)³ sets a framework for the delivery of net additional homes, tackling CO₂ emissions from industry, maintaining the reliability of the road network, increasing the overall employment rate and increasing the gross value added⁴ from the sub-regional economy.

³Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement: partnership between Tees Valley Local authorities and One North East.

⁴Gross value added is the economic value of goods and services in a town or region

3.4.4 A new coordinated approach to securing strategic funding for infrastructure has recently been established. Key organisations like Tees Valley Living, One North East and the Homes and Communities Agency undertake a single appraisal to establish priorities for funding strategic housing, employment and transport infrastructure. As a new initiative, funding and projects have yet to be identified.

⁵The Tees Valley HGP, coordinated by Tees Valley Living, provides funding for and commits the Tees Valley area to accelerated housing delivery up to 2017.

3.4.5 Additional Government funding has also been secured for housing delivery across the sub-region, through the award of Housing Growth Point (HGP)⁵. In the short term, funding is being used to unlock stalled development sites, such as Central Park and the former Beaumont Hill School sites in Darlington. The Community Infrastructure Fund and Kickstart funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are also being actively pursued to bring forward private housing sites, whilst the Council has secured £3 million to deliver 62 social rented homes on Council owned land, and several social landlords have been successful in securing HCA funding for additional affordable housing provision.

⁶Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Project aims to remove barriers to users of the bus service and deliver new infrastructure

3.4.6 Transport infrastructure plays a key role in the timely delivery of development. A £9.2m bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport as part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement Project⁶ to help secure a range of improvements to the bus network, like a new junction at Whessoe Road/North Road. A further £9.1 m would be available across the Tees Valley to improve bus stops and real time information facilities.

3.4.7 The Government's Regional Funding Allocation will provide funding for the initial scoping stages of a rail based metro for the Tees Valley, including the provision of a new metro stop next to Bank Top Station, with the metro line connecting Darlington to Saltburn.

3.4.8 Whilst significant public sector funding will underpin much of the infrastructure delivery outlined in this Core Strategy, short public sector funding cycles, sometimes as little as three years, can make it difficult to plan for long-term growth. Commercial and private providers operate different investment plans cycles, and utilities providers operate to their own five year Asset Management Plans, adding to the difficulty of co-ordinating future investment. Further work still needs to be done with the responsible infrastructure providers to ensure that the Borough's necessary infrastructure is provided in a timely fashion.

⁷Draft Darlington Local Infrastructure Plan (LIP), DBC, 2009.

A LIP sets out how the infrastructure that will be needed to deliver the Core Strategy will be delivered, by whom and when, as far as is possible given the information currently available.

3.4.9 At a local level, Darlington's Local Infrastructure Plan⁷ is required to show that sufficient, appropriate infrastructure is available or can be provided to deliver the policies in this strategy.

3.4.10 The 'Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery' sections for each policy identify key infrastructure requirements, their funding and delivery mechanisms. Detailed delivery will be set out in the Local Infrastructure Plan, including:

- specific strategic and local infrastructure requirements, where appropriate, identified on a phased basis;
- costs for provision, including scale of public sector funding and the level of contribution required from the commercial/private sector;
- the technical justification for contributions required;
- potential funding gaps between infrastructure requirements and likely available public and private funding sources;
- delivery mechanisms;
- roles and responsibilities of each of the delivery bodies, including the Council, infrastructure providers and delivery agencies; and
- future monitoring processes.

3.4.11 A draft Local Infrastructure Plan has been published⁷ for consultation alongside this document.

Developer Contributions

⁸Planning obligations or Section 106 agreements are legally binding agreements between landowners and/or developers and the Council.

3.4.12 Darlington's new development should not place any additional unacceptable impacts on the Borough's physical, social and green infrastructure. Where new development is promoted in parts of the Borough where infrastructure provision is insufficient, planning obligations⁸ can help to ensure that any development that does take place is sustainable. New or enhanced infrastructure provision in the locality can be secured either directly or by requiring financial contributions to be made towards infrastructure provision. Infrastructure provision can also be phased to meet the gradual additional demands arising from new development.

The Issues

What approach to use to secure planning obligations?

3.4.13 New development in Darlington should provide for the necessary infrastructure, on and off site, to support the development and mitigate its impacts on the existing community. Planning obligations and their prioritisation will be determined at the local level, taking into account site

specific issues, the availability of other funding and delivery mechanisms, the needs in the locality, national, regional and local guidance, the priorities of 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', and the impact on the viability of the scheme.

3.4.14 A flexible approach to delivery will be required, particularly in the strategic locations identified in Policy CS1, to allow for the necessary co-ordination of activity by a range of commercial and public sector infrastructure providers, and for the different lead in and delivery times attached to any funding streams that may be secured. Phasing of enabling infrastructure provision will also need to reflect the phasing of delivery indicated in Policy CS1, and will be coordinated and delivered in partnership with a range of other agencies and bodies, like the Highways Agency, the Local Education Authority, utility companies, Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trust and private sector partners.

3.4.15 Some types of strategic infrastructure like sport and recreation facilities and highways works become overloaded as a result of several developments. So that the cumulative impact of development is addressed in a holistic way, developers may be expected to contribute to an infrastructure fund to mitigate against the overload of strategic facilities.

How to seek planning obligations?

⁹Payments can fund works or facilities to ensure that the needs arising from the development are met, and that the contributions are sufficient to cover the impact of the development on other infrastructure away from the immediate development site.

3.4.16 Planning obligations can be sought in many ways; through payment of a standard charge or tariff, through standard formulae and/or through the payment of financial contributions⁹. The nature and scale of contributions sought will be directly related to the size of the development and the extent to which it places additional demands upon the area; site specific infrastructure provision or contributions to a strategic infrastructure pot will be consistently and transparently applied and monitored. Where infrastructure provision, works or facilities are provided as part of the development, the level of any standard charge, tariff or standard formulae may be re-assessed and modified appropriately to reflect the level of on site provision.

¹⁰Community Infrastructure Levy: draft regulations published July 2009.

3.4.17 Should the Government's proposals for a Community Infrastructure Levy¹⁰ be adopted, it would provide a new way of collecting financial contributions from developers and the matters for which they could be sought.

The Options Considered

3.4.18 Two options have been identified as part of the ongoing infrastructure plan work, to secure planning obligations from new development:

- (a) Negotiating planning obligations on a site specific basis to meet identified needs in the locality; or
- (b) Applying a tariff and/or site specific planning obligations to meet identified local needs.

No options on this issue were presented in the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report 2008.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

3.4.19 Sustainability appraisal found option (b) to be the most sustainable. No mitigation was identified.

3.4.20 Comments made during the development of draft policies asked for the policy to accurately reflect government guidance and to set out which planning document will contain details about planning obligations. Other

comments included a request for the viability of planning obligations to be considered.

3.4.21 Taking account of the matters raised above, the Council's preferred option is option (b). This will provide for the possible introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy or any similar scheme, and reflects the need to accommodate, wherever possible, a wide range of aspirations from service providers, whilst acknowledging concerns about the viability of development proposals in the Borough, particularly in less buoyant market conditions. This is expressed in revised draft policy CS4.

Revised Draft Policy CS4 : Developer Contributions

Planning obligations will be negotiated to secure the necessary physical, social and environmental infrastructure required as a consequence of development. These will be consistent with national planning guidance and appropriate to the type and scale of development and will be required to mitigate any additional impacts of the development on the locality.

The range and level of planning obligations sought will take into account the viability of the development, having regard to any additional unforeseen costs. Where appropriate, standard charges, tariffs and formulae will be applied.

Infrastructure provision will be linked directly to the phasing of development. Site related infrastructure requirements will be prioritised to reflect the identified needs in that locality to include, but not limited to:

1. affordable and special needs housing provision;
2. early years, primary, secondary and tertiary education and extended services provision to serve new and existing communities;
3. provision and enhancement of open space, landscaping and children's play areas;
4. providing for and improving accessibility within the Borough by a variety of modes of sustainable transport and promotion of sustainable transport modes;
5. provision and enhancement of priority habitats including habitat creation, enhancement and management;
6. employment skills and training opportunities as part of the construction of major new development;
7. road and highways improvements; and
8. utilities infrastructure.

Planning obligations will be sought as part of major developments where it is required to help deliver the strategic infrastructure necessary to mitigate the adverse cumulative impacts of several developments. These will include, but will not be limited to:

9. a carbon management fund to provide off site renewable energy and improve energy efficiency of existing dwellings;
10. strategic sport and recreation provision and enhancement;
11. improvements to the public realm and provision of public art; and strategic highway improvements.

Infrastructure provision will, where necessary, be coordinated and delivered in partnership with other authorities and agencies.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Affordable Housing SPD Design of New Development SPD Planning Obligations SPD Open Space Strategy	Development Control decisions Development briefs/masterplans Local Transport Plan
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or improve physical, social and/or green infrastructure
Monitoring Indicators	
NI0005 NI155 NI175 NI186 NI188 NI197 Core E3 Local 13 Local 21	Percentage of residents satisfied with their area as a place to live Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area Adapting to climate change Improved biodiversity – active management of local sites Renewable energy capacity by type Open space provision in the urban area Low carbon energy generation

SECTION 4: PROSPEROUS DARLINGTON

4.1 SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Context

4.1.1 A strong local economy is vital to improving living standards and quality of life for local people. In recent decades, the Borough's economy has undergone a transformation with employment in traditional industries (manufacturing) declining. However, specialised engineering remains a key strength, providing high value jobs with good growth prospects. Particular growth has also been seen in the service sector (business and professional services), which now dominates.

4.1.2 However, the Borough needs to widen its economic base if it is to continue to increase the number and quality of jobs available for its residents across all sectors and increase wage levels, as is the vision in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed¹.

4.1.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)² plans for economic growth of some 2.5% per year over the plan period, and Darlington is considered to be a key location that can contribute to that growth. Work on the Darlington Gateway Strategy³ indicated that there were good prospects that the Borough's recent economic growth could be sustained over the longer term.

4.1.4 The present economic climate means this is a particular challenge in the short term and aspirations of the Darlington Gateway Strategy may be unachievable in the early years of the plan period. However, efforts have been intensified to support businesses that want to start up, grow and develop and to attract key employment sectors, so that the economic base can be broadened and wealth created and retained, and in so doing, enable the Borough to recover from the current downturn as soon as possible.

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed is the sustainable community strategy for Darlington, 2008.

²The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (July 2008)

³Darlington Gateway Strategy (King Sturge, BDP and Regeneris), 2006

The Issues

How much employment development to plan for in Darlington?

⁴Policy 18, RSS, July 2008

⁵specifically allocated for employment uses and provides for the changing employment needs of the Borough. Generally restricted to use classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial and B8 (Storage and Distribution) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended)

⁶locations the RSS identifies as critical to delivering accelerated growth in the regional economy.

⁷Darlington Employment Land Review (September 2009).

4.1.5 The Local Development Framework needs to ensure a supply of land in sustainable locations to provide for long-term sustainable employment growth that is consistent with the aspirations of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS⁴ indicates that up to 235ha of general employment land⁵, including airport related land at Durham Tees Valley Airport, needs to be provided in Darlington. This is in addition to 125ha at the Key Employment Locations⁶ of Faverdale and Heighington Lane, giving a total provision of 360ha in Darlington.

4.1.6 The Regional Spatial Strategy period runs until 2021. As the Local Development Framework plan period runs from 2011 to 2026, account has to be taken for the additional five-year period between 2021 and 2026. This has been calculated on a pro-rata basis, using the Regional Spatial Strategy figure of 235 ha. This method provides a figure of an additional requirement of 69 ha over the period 2021 to 2026.

4.1.7 Current expectations for future employment growth⁷ (and the amount of land that this requires) are based on the projected average employment land take-up rates, adjusted by forecast annual growth rates. Sectoral growth forecasts indicate what types of employment land will be required over the next fifteen years or so. Arising from these forecasts, indicative amounts of additional floor space that will be required by 2026 have been calculated (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Summary of Gross Floorspace Requirements (in hectares) by Industrial Classification

	2009-13	2014-18	2019-26	Total required 2009-2026	Average per annum
B1 Offices	2.30	9.27	4.50	17.38	0.97
B2 General	5.72	29.95	22.94	62.61	3.48
B8 Distribution	1.57	8.89	9.01	21.55	1.20
Total	9.59	48.11	36.44	101.54	5.64

Source: Experian Forecast for Darlington: October 2009

4.1.8 Table 4.1 shows an overall additional land requirement of about 101ha of land up to 2026. This is significantly below the Regional Spatial Strategy requirement (see para. 4.1.6), indicating that the expected land requirement can be easily accommodated within the Council's employment land portfolio, over the plan period, if provided in accordance with RSS requirements. Sites will be allocated to ensure that there is a balanced portfolio capable of supporting the specific sectoral needs identified.

4.1.9 The projected requirement of 101ha will provide the benchmark against which to monitor the take-up of employment land over the plan period.

Where to locate new employment uses

4.1.10 The RSS indicates that new employment development should be focussed on sustainable locations, to make the best use of land and resources available to improve economic performance⁸. It also promotes regenerating and upgrading existing employment land before allocating new greenfield land.

⁸Policy 18 of the North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (July 2008)

4.1.11 Historically, the development of employment land has fluctuated dramatically, often being related to the amount of public sector financial assistance available. In recent years, Darlington has attracted a number of high profile schemes on greenfield land at the edge of the urban area, e.g. high quality office development at Morton Palms and distribution and industrial development in the Faverdale area.

4.1.12 The Darlington Employment Land Review 2009 (ELR) suggests that these recent developments should be complemented by promoting employment areas in the town centre and in the Town Centre Fringe for office and other mixed uses, at Faverdale for larger industrial uses and logistics, at Yarm Road and Lingfield Point for business, industrial and warehousing and some business park/prestige development, and at Durham Tees Valley Airport for airport related uses.

Figure 4.1: Strategic employment locations

(insert figure - strategic location plan of the areas we mention here)

How to best use the Borough's existing supply of employment land

4.1.13 Existing employment land is coming under increasing pressure for redevelopment for other higher value uses, particularly land in less accessible locations. In recent years, this has mainly been isolated sites, but has included some larger established employment areas.

4.1.14 A balance needs to be maintained between allocating good quality marketable sites attractive to new uses on the one hand and providing sufficient land for traditional established employment uses on the other. Established employment areas in the inner areas of town (such as Albert Hill and Cleveland Street) make a significant contribution to the overall land supply, accommodating existing business and providing opportunities for new growing businesses, but newer sites in the outer urban area, such as Faverdale East Business Park and Morton Palms provide a better business environment and better access to major roads, and have proved attractive, e.g. Incubator units at Morton Palms off Yarm Road.

4.1.15 Some existing employment areas and allocations, such as the Valley Street, Blakett Road, Lingfield and Morton Park areas, would benefit from a more relaxed approach⁷, allowing the introduction of other mixed uses, such as housing, community uses and other complementary employment uses which are appropriate to each specific location.

How to promote a viable countryside

4.1.16 The RSS⁹ indicates that support should be given to enterprises that require a rural location, where they would support the rural economy and contribute to rural diversification. Only a small proportion (1.4%) of the population of the Borough is engaged in agriculture¹⁰, but this is more than the proportions at national, regional and sub-regional levels .

4.1.17 Most of the Borough is attractive, unspoilt countryside with clear limits between the built up areas and the countryside. Whilst protecting its character is important (see Policy CS14), it is also vital that the countryside remains viable and prosperous for those who live and work there. There are few employment sites remaining outside the urban area and Durham Tees Valley Airport, and the Council has no evidence to indicate that there are any identified and unmet needs.

The Options Considered

⁹Policy 11 of the North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (July 2008)

¹⁰ NOMIS, 2006

4.1.18 The options that were considered to address these issues are

¹¹See Options 14A – 14C of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

¹²See Options 15A – 15C of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

¹³See Options 16A – 16D of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

¹⁴See Options 18A – 18E of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

1. For employment growth:
 - (a) Modest employment growth to 2015 followed by reduced growth;
 - (b) Maintain modest employment growth; or
 - (c) Maintain recent high employment growth.
2. For the distribution of the employment land supply¹²:
 - (a) Restricted employment land supply across the Borough;
 - (b) Managed employment land supply across the Borough;
 - (c) Market-led employment land supply.
3. For the use of existing employment land¹³:
 - (a) Loss and relocation of employment land and businesses;
 - (b) Redevelopment with new employment provision;
 - (c) Safeguard employment land;
 - (d) Combination.
4. For employment in the villages and countryside¹⁴:
 - (a) Employment for local needs;
 - (b) Farm diversification and local needs;
 - (c) Employment development throughout the countryside;
 - (d) More protection of the best and most versatile farmland; or
 - (e) A combination of a, b, c and d.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

- 4.1.19** Key points raised during earlier stages of policy preparation included:
- A range of views on whether to plan for modest or high employment growth;
 - Need to capitalise on Darlington's location, but concern about environmental and infrastructure capacity to accommodate it;
 - Employment growth needed to fund social development;
 - Market led approach to employment land provision offers greatest flexibility;
 - Support redevelopment of existing employment land with new employment provision;
 - Concern about the sustainability of relocating businesses to peripheral greenfield sites; and
 - Employment development in the countryside should only be to sustain existing communities.

4.1.20 Sustainability appraisal found (1b) (2b) (3b) and 4(e) above to be the most sustainable options.

4.1.21 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is one that allows the flexibility to enable provision to meet all of the employment growth options 1(a) to (c), 2(a) to (c), 3(a) to (d) and also 18A previously presented. The main effects of the policy will be to encourage major employment development in the priority areas of the town centre, town centre fringe and Central Park areas, and also to facilitate the gradual renewal of existing business areas over the plan period.

Revised Draft Policy CS5: Supporting the Local Economy

A continuous and diverse supply of employment land to meet the needs of existing and future economic development will be provided in appropriate locations, according to the locational strategy set out in Policy CS1.

Provision will be made for up to 235ha of additional land for general and

A further 125 ha of employment land will be made available at the key employment locations of Faverdale and Heighington Lane.

The focus of other sites contributing to the employment land supply will be on suitable previously developed sites in sustainable locations within the urban area.

Existing viable employment sites and other sites with special attributes will be protected by safeguarding them for employment uses only or for mixed uses, where appropriate, unless it can be demonstrated that they are not required for the purposes of providing a balanced portfolio of land for employment purposes.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Employment Land Review Darlington Economic Assessment (pending)	Development Control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Means of Delivery
DBC DBC/HCA DBC/One North East ONE/DBC	Bidding for Single Programme Funding for site acquisition sites in the Town Centre Fringe. Bidding for funding from HCA to assist with the preparation of Area Action Plan, masterplanning and site specific development briefs. Central Park: facilitate the development of the southern (employment uses) end of the site, with possible European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) money to assist in the provision of a business incubator unit
Monitoring Indicators	
BD1 BD2 BD3 Local 11 Local 19	Total amount of additional employment floor space by type Total amount of employment floor space on PDL by type Employment land available by type Losses of employment land by type Amount of airport related development (ha)

4.2 VIBRANT TOURISM AND CULTURAL OFFER

Context

4.2.1 Darlington is ideally placed to enhance its quality tourism offer. It has potential for attracting visitors from a wide area for business and leisure, because of its good connections by road, rail and air, and because of its location on the border of North Yorkshire and County Durham, acting as a gateway to the rest of the Tees Valley and the whole of the north-east region.

4.2.2 Enhancing the Borough's tourism and cultural offer can support regeneration, provide employment opportunities, support rural diversification, create cohesive communities and improve local quality of life, whilst supporting the community's learning and personal development¹.

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, Darlington Partnership, 2008

4.2.3 The 'Head of Steam' museum and Brick Train Sculpture are key attractions, based on Darlington's industrial and railway heritage, but increasingly, the Borough's historic, cultural and natural landscapes are attracting visitors, exploring places like Piercebridge Roman Fort and the Ulnaby Medieval village. Rural diversification schemes, such as Archers Jersey Ice Cream Parlour and the farm shops found at Piercebridge and Burtree House are extending the range of countryside attractions, whilst a range of high quality urban and countryside hotels are helping to attract business and special occasion visitors.

4.2.4 Cultural and arts attractions like the Civic Theatre, the Arts Centre and The Forum also attract visitors, whilst newer, public art attractions like the Art in the Yards, the Life Pulse, the Market Cascade and the Threshold water sculpture act as a focus for visitors to the town centre.

The Issues

How to provide a vibrant tourism and cultural offer?

4.2.5 It is envisaged that the Borough's existing successful tourism and cultural attractions, such as the Head of Steam, Civic Theatre and 20,000 seater football stadium will continue to underpin the local tourism and cultural offer. As such, these will be safeguarded and enhanced, but complementary provision will need to be encouraged if Darlington is to be recognised as a cultural destination. Aspirations exist in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed¹ to expand the arts and cultural services offer, particularly in Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe. This could include a wider range of cultural attractions and services, and the enhancement of the emerging creative industries sector, with facilities for a wide range of artistic, educational, creative, technical, publishing and production services. By providing creative outlets for a diversity of local people, such facilities and services would also generate local employment, provide a unique local educational resource, improve well-being and promote social inclusion.

²Regional Spatial Strategy, GONE, 2008

³Taking Forward the Darlington Gateway, 2006

4.2.6 The provision of new facilities should be easily accessible by sustainable transport, in sequentially preferable locations². The area around the Civic Theatre and The Forum, particularly along the eastern edge of the Town Centre Fringe³ provides an opportunity, with the addition of this range of cultural services and facilities, to form a multi-disciplinary cultural quarter. This area would have a pivotal role in creating a creative arts cluster improving the economic prospects of the area, reducing social inequalities whilst enhancing the local environment. With its own sense of identity and with stronger pedestrian connections formed across the inner ring road, it would link well with the Town Centre.

4.2.7 There is also an opportunity to strengthen this provision with a strategic tourism facility that capitalises on the Borough's gateway location. The area around the A68/A1(M) interchange has the potential to

accommodate such a facility and could attract a wide range of visitors from outside Darlington, as well as providing local employment.

How to provide visitor accommodation to match aspirations for tourism growth?

4.2.8 Visitor accommodation is vital to the growth of the tourism and cultural economy. A recent study of future hotel and visitor accommodation needs⁴ found that Darlington has a significant existing hotel provision for a town of its size. The newly opened Rockcliffe Hall has added to that provision, and over the next 2-3 years a further 300 rooms are anticipated to become available at a range of locations across the Borough. The study recommended that a mix and a sufficient quality of hotels is required to cater for a range of budgets and provide a choice of tourist accommodation, so that visitors, including the corporate and contractor market, will stay longer, spend more and travel less by private car.

⁴Tees Valley Hotel Futures, Hotel Solutions, July 2009

4.2.9 There is market potential for a new budget hotel and to extend the Borough's current budget hotel at Morton Park, to provide an additional small boutique hotel in the town centre and to upgrade and possibly expand the existing 3 star hotels like Hall Garth. Provision of a 3 star hotel at Central Park and the development of a budget or upper budget hotel at Durham Tees Valley Airport remain possibilities. With future office and business park development proposed in Borough, this could generate demand for 3 star hotels in the Town Centre Fringe, Morton Park, Morton Palms to cater for the business market. There is also market potential for serviced or self-catering apartments to meet the needs of corporate, construction worker and leisure markets.

4.2.10 Expansion in passenger numbers and freight travel at Durham Tees Valley Airport may generate increased demand from air crews and travellers in the long term, giving rise to capacity for another hotel close to the airport, to complement the existing provision.

4.1.11 Market led demand for guesthouses, static and touring caravan sites and camping sites in appropriate locations would complement this overall provision.

The Options Considered

4.1.12 The options to promote a vibrant tourism and cultural offer in Darlington, in part identified through the development of the Hotel Futures study and through the initial Issues and Options Report⁵, will be achieved by:

- a) Promoting Darlington as a Gateway to the North East
- b) Promoting Darlington as a Gateway to the Tees Valley
- c) Positioning Darlington as a 'rural city'
- d) Support a range of quality hotels in appropriate locations to meet the needs of the market, complemented by a range of other visitor accommodation
- e) Promote Central Park as the preferred location for hotel development, followed by a range of hotels in appropriate locations, complemented by a range of other visitor accommodation

⁵See Option 17 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

4.1.13 Sustainability appraisal highlighted the social benefits of tourism through the links to job creation and regeneration. The appraisal found option (b) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the consequential adverse

environmental impacts that tourism can generate on the transport network and the impact development can have on climate change, biodiversity and flood risk. This can be mitigated through good design of new development in sustainable locations.

4.1.14 All options were considered, and for visitor accommodation, it became clear that by prioritising a hotel at Central Park, it would be difficult to resist opportunities for additional hotels in sequentially preferable locations like the town centre and edge of town centre locations. Additionally it could potentially restrict additional hotel development across Darlington, which would be inconsistent with the Borough's economic growth aspirations.

4.1.15 Comments made during the development of draft policies asked for the definition of tourism to be expanded to include nature-based and cultural heritage, and for the deliverability of a strategic tourism facility to be reassessed.

4.1.16 Taking into account the all matters outlined above and the issues raised in the Tees Valley Hotel Futures Study, the Council's revised preferred option is a combination of Options (a), (b) (c) and (d) and is expressed in revised draft policy CS6.

Policy CS6: Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer

A sustainable, vibrant tourism and cultural sector will be promoted and enhanced for the benefit of the local economy, community and visitors by:

- Safeguarding and enhancing existing tourist attractions in Darlington, such as the Head of Steam;
- Promoting new tourist attractions, particularly in the town centre and Town Centre Fringe, and which promote awareness of and interest in the Borough's railway, industrial and cultural heritage;
- Promoting a strategic tourism opportunity adjoining the A68/A1(M) interchange;
- Promoting appropriate nature-based tourism attractions which support visits to and enjoyment of the countryside and/or where they promote access to or use of heritage assets;
- Safeguarding and promoting the enhancement of existing cultural attractions including Darlington Civic Theatre; and
- Encouraging provision of a diverse range of cultural attractions and creative arts industries, particularly in the Town Centre Fringe to create the Darlington Cultural Quarter.

To support the sustainable growth of tourism in Darlington, a range of visitor accommodation, including provision to meet the needs of disabled people will be required in appropriate locations, accessible by sustainable transport. These will include:

- The retention and enhancement of existing high quality hotel and guest house provision;
- Encouragement of the provision of new hotels in the Town Centre, the Town Centre Fringe, Central Park, Morton Palms, Morton Park and at Durham Tees Valley Airport to appropriately reflect market demand;
- The provision of serviced or self catering apartments;
- The retention and provision of static and touring caravan and camping sites.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Planning Obligations SPD	Development briefs and masterplans Taking Forward the Darlington Gateway
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Delivery Mechanism
DBC Commercial Estates Group/Keepmoat/Yuill Homes/Hotel provider Private sector hotel providers	Bidding for Single Programme Funding/HCA funding to support the strategic masterplanning for sites in the Town Centre Fringe. Private sector funding to enable provision of a hotel at Central Park Provision of hotels in the Borough
Monitoring Indicators	
New New	Amount of tourism or cultural developments granted Number of new visitor bedrooms permitted

SECTION 5: A VIBRANT TOWN CENTRE AND ACCESSIBLE LOCAL SHOPS AND SERVICES

5.1 The Context

The Borough

5.1.1 Darlington Borough is generally well provided with shopping facilities, both in terms of quantity (the amount of floorspace relative to the population) and quality (encompassing accessibility and the range of retailers and retail formats present). The Darlington Retail Study 2008¹, whose findings, conclusions and recommendations underpin much of this section, found fairly high levels of satisfaction with the current provision. Relatively little of Borough households' total spending on retail goods 'leaks out' elsewhere, and additional retail spending occurs in the Borough from households living outside it.

¹ Source: Darlington Retail Study 2008, MT Town Planning, November 2008. www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

The Town Centre

5.1.2 The main concentration of retail facilities is in Darlington town centre. This is the fifth largest shopping destination in North East England with around 100,000m² gross² of shopping floorspace - 40% of the Borough's total - across 300 shops, supplemented by 100 ancillary professional, financial and food and drink uses within the main shopping area. It is a major sub-regional hub for almost a quarter of a million people, serving residents of the Borough, the western part of the Tees Valley and extensive areas of south and west Durham and north-west Yorkshire, not only for shopping but for leisure, entertainment, recreation, personal and professional business and other services. It does so with a distinctive and special character, born of being a blend of modern centre and historic market town. One of its key attributes is that it continues to be highly accessible by a wide range of transport, including sustainable means, to a large proportion of its catchment population.

² Floorspace figures throughout this chapter are 'gross' unless specifically stated to be 'net'.

5.1.3 The town centre is a key economic asset to the Borough, generating considerable turnover and wealth and employing thousands of people; it is probably the single-largest focus of employment in the town. Retailing, particularly of non-food ('comparison') items - underpins its economy,

³ Source: State of the Cities database, DCLG 2008, (www.socd.communities.gov.uk/SOCD)

⁴ currently Cockerton and North Road district centres and Whinfield, Yarm Road, Neasham Road and Mowden local centres in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan, DBC, 1997 (as saved at 2007)

employing at least half of the town centre workforce directly³ and indirectly, providing spin-off customers to ancillary retail and service businesses.

District and Local Centres

5.1.4 The town centre is by far the largest centre in the Borough. A network of smaller district and local centres⁴ play important subsidiary roles. They provide residents with everyday shopping facilities and other services, both commercial (such as banks, takeaways, pubs and clubs) and public (such as health services, libraries or advice centres), conveniently close to their homes. Food shopping is at the heart of their role. About 15% of the Borough's shopping floorspace is found in these lower-order centres.

Local Shops and Services

5.1.5 Below this hierarchy of centres are about 200 mainly-small local 'corner' and village shops (including around 80 food shops), sometimes clustered in small groups or parades with other local services. These are particularly important to areas relatively remote from the centres and for residents not using a car.

Major Out-of-Centre Retail Facilities

5.1.6 Recent decades, particularly the 1990s, saw the growth of substantial shopping facilities in out-of-centre locations within the Borough - particularly on the eastern side of the town at Darlington Retail Park and Morton Park - in the form of retail warehouses and large supermarkets or superstores. Around one-quarter of the shop floorspace of the Borough is now found in these. They are very popular but are overwhelmingly car-oriented, lacking the wider accessibility of the centres, and so stimulating more car use and giving rise to local traffic congestion.

Recent Trends and Future Need

5.1.7 Notwithstanding the continuing net inflow of retail spending into the Borough, and the relatively good health of the town centre, both have declined in recent years as competition for shopping expenditure has increased - initially from competing town centres and retail warehouses and more recently, from supermarkets and the internet. Some of the non-retail functions of the town centre have also been lost, particularly office employment which has tended to focus instead on business parks on the periphery of the town. For more than a decade after the opening of the Cornmill shopping centre in 1992, investment in the town centre by the commercial sector was virtually non-existent.

5.1.8 In respect of retail spending, household expenditure on food (convenience) goods in the Borough has declined (in relative, market share, terms) as people living outside the area now have more opportunities to shop nearer to their homes in large modern supermarkets. As a result, the present quantity of convenience provision in the Borough will be sufficient to meet needs for some years to come; only 1,000m² or so of additional convenience floorspace is forecast to be needed by 2016⁵. That could rise to a, still-modest, cumulative 2,500m² by 2021.

⁵ The Darlington Retail Study provides ranges of floorspace forecasts because the turnover per square metre of different kinds of retail operation vary; the figures cited in this chapter are mid-range ones.

5.1.9 Darlington town centre has lost significant market share in sales of comparison goods. Traditionally its main competitors were other town centres such as Middlesbrough and Newcastle, and the MetroCentre at Gateshead. More recently, Teesside Park has drawn trade away from Darlington as its units have been occupied by 'high street' names. Destinations within the Borough itself are also increasingly competing with the town centre. Retail warehouses initially took mainly sales of bulkier items, such as furniture, away from the centre but some supplement these today by the sale of smaller

items too. Also, supermarkets are increasingly supplementing their food and other convenience goods offer with areas for items such as clothing, which are mainstays of town centre retailing. This provision is such that some compete as strongly with the town centre as do long-established rivals.

5.1.10 Growing and significant competition is also coming from the sale of particular ranges of comparison goods, such as books and recorded music, over the internet. The internet attracts more comparison goods expenditure from Darlington town centre's catchment population than any other single destination.

5.1.11 A quantitative need for additional comparison floorspace in the short term (by 2011) has, nevertheless, been identified for the Borough and the Council has been working with others to provide for it in the Commercial Street area of the town centre, as the area was identified as having the greatest potential for retail expansion in the 2001 town centre development strategy, Adding to Quality⁶. A scheme at Commercial Street⁷ remains important to the Borough as the units provided should be attractive to national retailers not presently represented in Darlington, particularly in the fashion and lifestyle sectors, and the development as a whole would greatly strengthen the town centre's competitive position.

⁶ Adding to Quality, A Development Strategy for Darlington Town Centre, DBC and One NorthEast, Feb 2001

⁷ Commercial Street Development: Planning and Highway Requirements, DBC, Sept 2001; revised Oct 2004

5.1.12 Construction of the permitted scheme at Commercial Street, would take up almost all the requirement for additional comparison floorspace by 2011, with capacity for only around 1,000sqm remaining available. This will rise to a cumulative 10,000m² by 2016, and there could be a need for a further 16,000m² of comparison floorspace provision (that is, a cumulative 26,000m²) by 2021.

5.1.13 In respect of non-retail functions, there are signs of a reversal of the recent preference of developers for greenfield sites rather than central ones, including for office employment sectors which value easy accessibility for their customers and staff. A major new office development opened on the north-west edge of the town centre in the mid-2000s, and another development to accommodate 480 staff of the Department for Children, Schools and Families has been granted in the Feethams/ Beaumont Street area of the town centre.

5.2 The Issues

1. How best to safeguard and promote the vitality and viability of the town centre?

5.2.1 Retailing, particularly of comparison goods, underpins the economy of the town centre and is at the heart of its vitality and viability. The centre needs to halt and, as much as it can, reverse the losses of market share experienced in recent years. Losses to internet shopping are unlikely to be retrieved - indeed, are more likely to increase - but comparison trade lost to competing destinations, including retail warehouses and supermarkets within the Borough could be stemmed and, at least partially, clawed back.

5.2.2 Encouraging the return and growth of office employment within the town centre would further help boost pedestrian flows and retail trade, as well as bringing diversity and providing employees with more accessible workplaces than might otherwise be the case. Diversifying the role of the centre in other ways, such as by the encouragement of more non-alcohol related leisure attractions, could also stimulate vitality and viability, helping to widen the appeal of the town centre to more sections of the community outside shopping hours.

2. How to ensure that the hierarchy of shopping provision in the Borough meets the needs of residents, and how can good access be provided to local shops and services?

5.2.3 Although the town centre and large out-of-centre destinations attract the majority of retail spending in the Borough, the lower-order centres and local shops and services remain important in providing for residents' everyday needs close to their homes. Their easy accessibility by non-car modes can also have wider benefits including fostering healthier lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling, supporting local businesses, and helping reduce traffic congestion and the use of fossil fuels. But it is many years since the present hierarchy of centres was defined and the character and range of many of the facilities provided in them have changed.

5.2.4 Parts of the Borough away from the defined centres have also seen substantial residential development and there are geographical gaps in provision, at least in terms of defined centres. Centres and local shops can also be undermined by developments in more car-oriented but less widely-accessible and less environmentally-sustainable locations, such as through the opening of convenience stores at some petrol filling stations. Other threats can come from pressure for more financially-rewarding alternative development even when there may be no inherent lack of viability in the existing business and it still fulfils an important local need.

5.3 The Options Considered

⁸See Issue 30 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, DBC, Jan 2008

5.3.1 For the town centre issue, the options considered⁸ were whether to adopt:

- (a) a rigorous and pro-active approach to promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre; or
- (b) a less rigorous approach, recognising the potential benefits of some town centre-type development elsewhere in the Borough.

⁹See Issue 31 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, DBC, Jan 2008

5.3.2 In respect of the hierarchy of centres, the options were⁹:

- (a) whether to retain the hierarchy as currently defined; or
- (b) to change it, with possibilities ranging from designating additional centres - the 'village centre' at West Park in the north-west of the town and the area around The Square, Middleton St. George were the candidates suggested as most appropriate - to downgrading the status of some existing ones.

¹⁰See Issue 32 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, DBC, Jan 2008

5.3.3 In respect of local shops and services, the options were¹⁰:

- (a) keeping those which serve the needs of nearby residential areas, and requiring sites to be set aside in new residential developments;
- (b) protecting existing facilities from proposals elsewhere; or
- (c) a combination of these.

5.4 Preparing Revised Draft Policies

5.4.1 Sustainability appraisal of the town centre issue found option (a), to be the most sustainable, but added that investment opportunities not suitable for the town centre should be directed towards alternative sustainable locations. A large majority of referring respondents at the Issues and Options stage agreed with option (a), although some felt the needs assessment justifying it should be brought up to date. Draft policy CS7 in the 2008 Preferred Options document¹¹ pursued the approach of (a) and was

welcomed at consultation. It was accompanied by draft policy CS8 setting out the further retail provision that would be needed in the Borough, but a number of referring respondents thought that was not based on a sufficiently robust or up-to-date evidence base.

5.4.2 For the hierarchy of centres issue, sustainability appraisal concluded that adding another centre or centres at West Park and/or Middleton St. George under (b) would be the most sustainable option. This also attracted most support from respondents to the Issues and Options consultation. Sustainability appraisal of the local shops and services issue found option (c) to be the most sustainable. There was no clear preference from respondents at the Issues and Options stage. The 2008 Preferred Options brought the hierarchy and local shops issues together into a single draft policy (CS9) in line with the more sustainable and supported approaches. This was supported overwhelmingly by referring respondents.

5.4.3 Taking the above into account, the Council's revised preferred options, below, are similar to those in the 2008 Preferred Options but modified to incorporate the recommendations of the 2008 Retail Study.

5.4.4 In respect of the hierarchy of shopping centres in the Borough, the study concluded that the present hierarchy is still appropriate, that the defined centres still merit the status assigned to them, that they are well distributed and they provide most of the shops and services the public expect in them. It agreed that the groupings of facilities at West Park and Middleton St George warranted formal recognition as additional local centres, and that their designation would improve the network.

5.4.5 The retail study found that most, if not all, of the need for additional comparison floorspace up to 2011 would be taken up by the Oval scheme at Commercial Street, a development which the study said was key to the town centre's vitality and viability. Accordingly, Commercial Street is put forward in the draft policies below as the preferred first priority for retail development in the Borough over the plan period. It would be desirable if this was part of a mixed-use scheme, as with the Oval proposal, but it is not essential.

5.4.6 The additional 10,000m² of comparison retail floorspace needed in the Borough by 2016 is relatively modest (less than half the size of the Oval proposal). As recommended in the retail study, this should be accommodated within the town centre, in or adjacent to the primary shopping area (including, for example, by redevelopment or extension of existing stores).

5.4.7 Beyond 2016, the forecasts for comparison floorspace need are uncertain¹². The draft policies below therefore do not quantify that need, it being a matter for future reviews of the Strategy. The study recommended, however, that the town centre should remain the prime focus of comparison floorspace development throughout the plan period.

5.4.8 The ample present provision of convenience floorspace in the Borough, and low quantitative need is reflected in the draft policies below. The additional floorspace needed by 2016 should be taken up by small-scale proposals in centres (such as the extension or change of use of shops) and in areas poorly-served for food shopping, including new residential developments.

5.4.9 The 2008 Retail Study assessed not only retail issues but the wider health of the town centre. It echoed the findings of earlier studies, and the 2001 town centre development strategy, that the centre needed to diversify,

¹²National data from which local forecasts are derived, only goes up to 2016.

particularly its roles for leisure and office employment. Although constrained on most sides by the inner ring road, the centre has the physical capacity, on undeveloped and under-developed sites, to accommodate significant such development that does not need to be in the shopping frontages. Other than as part of a retail-led mixed-use scheme at Commercial Street, the area of greatest opportunity identified by the Council is in the southern part of the centre, around Feethams and Beaumont Street¹³.

5.4.10 The draft policies below give priority to the town centre in general and this area in particular as the location for the development of major, non-retail, town centre uses in the Borough during the plan period.

5.4.11 The present town centre is expected to be able to accommodate much of the required development for non-retail town centre uses in the first parts of the Core Strategy period. However, part-way through the period, depending on the pace of recovery of the economy and the success of promoting and enhancing the town centre, it is expected to need to physically and functionally expand beyond the confines of the ring road, into the present 'edge of the centre'¹⁴.

¹⁴ as defined in PPS6.

5.4.12 The greatest potential for expansion lies to the east, in order to benefit from factors including the excellent rail connections at Bank Top station (including via the proposed Tees Valley Metro), the proximity of the Central Park regeneration area, the cultural and entertainment facilities already within the area, its underlying historic character and the opportunities presented by undeveloped and under-developed sites. Other edge-of-centre areas to the north and south-east of the ring road present similar, if lesser, opportunities. The whole arc around the centre - known as the 'Town Centre Fringe' - is accordingly put forward in the draft policies below as the preferred location for major, non-retail, town centre type development, for the time when these cannot be accommodated within the present centre. The town centre boundary will be extended in stages, rather than across the whole of the Town Centre Fringe, in order to better focus development activity and maximise the return on investment in infrastructure. In order to properly function as an extension to the town centre, it will be essential that development is preceded by significant improvements in connections across the ring road, particularly for pedestrians and other non-car users

Revised Draft Policy CS7: The Town Centre

The vitality and viability of Darlington town centre will be safeguarded and enhanced by protecting and promoting its role as the sub-regional centre for the western part of the Tees Valley City Region and neighbouring parts of North Yorkshire and south and west Durham, including its role as a market town.

It will be the locational focus for the development of retail, office, leisure, entertainment and other main town centre uses needed within the Borough, and such uses will be encouraged and directed there as a first preference.

The first priority for retail development in the Borough is the completion of a major retail-led scheme in the Commercial Street area, to include around 20,000 to 23,000sqm of gross retail floorspace in approximately 25-30 shop units, for occupation mainly by retailers of comparison goods. Incorporation of this within a mixed-use development would be encouraged.

Other than as part of the scheme at Commercial Street, the first priority location for the development of major non-retail town centre uses in the Borough will be other parts of the town centre, including the Feethams/Beaumont Street area.

When the present town centre can physically accommodate no further major non-retail development, its defined boundary will be extended into the Town Centre Fringe and such development will be encouraged there. Extension will be in phases, with the initial priority direction being eastwards from the present centre towards the East Coast Main Line railway. Extension will be conditional on improvements in connections across the ring road, particularly for pedestrians and other non-car users, being in place.

Revised Draft Policy CS8: Additional Retail Provision

The need for additional comparison floorspace in the Borough by 2011 should be met mainly or wholly by the Commercial Street development. Any that is not taken up by that should be accommodated within the primary shopping area of the town centre.

Approximately 10,000m² of further comparison retail floorspace will be required in the Borough by 2016. This should be provided within the town centre in, or if not possible, immediately adjacent and well-connected to, the primary shopping area.

There is no quantitative need for additional convenience retail floorspace in the Borough before 2016, at which time only around 1,000m² will be needed. This floorspace should be provided within existing centres or where it will remedy qualitative deficiencies in the geographical distribution of food shopping, including within areas of new residential development.

Beyond 2016, the town centre should remain the principal focus for comparison floorspace.

Environmental capacity is as set out in PPS6.

Revised Draft Policy CS9: District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services

The hierarchy of centres in the Borough will be taken into account in considering the appropriateness of proposals for development. The hierarchy is as follows:

- a) Darlington town centre (sub-regional centre);
- b) Cockerton and North Road centres (district centres);
- c) Mowden, Neasham Road, Whinfield, Yarm Road, West Park and Middleton St. George centres (local centres).

The role of the district and local centres in providing food shopping and a range of other services to meet people's day-to-day needs in accessible locations will be safeguarded and enhanced. Development should be consistent with a centre's scale, function, environmental capacity and ability to be served by transport modes other than the car. Any proposed new shops within these centres will be limited to maximum individual sizes of approximately 400m² gross floorspace for convenience shops and 100m² gross for comparison shops.

Individual shops and services and small neighbourhood clusters of such facilities which meet the day-to-day needs of nearby residents, particularly for food shopping, without the need to use a car will be protected and promoted. Proposed new shops in such circumstances will be limited to a maximum 100m² gross floorspace unless a qualitative need to remedy a geographical deficiency in the distribution of food shopping can be demonstrated, in which case convenience shops up to 400m² gross may be permitted.

5.5 Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

CS7: The Town Centre	
Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Design of New Development SPD Adding to Quality: A Development Strategy for Darlington Town Centre	Commercial Street Development: Planning and Highway Requirements Feethams Planning & Development Brief Development briefs and masterplans Development control decisions Commenting on neighbouring authorities planning applications Town centre management
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
Private sector/DBC	Private sector funding and construction of a retail-led scheme in Commercial Street area, with DBC contribution of land
Private sector/DCSF/DBC	Private sector/DCSF funding, construction of offices and other non-retail development in Feethams/Beaumont Street area, with DBC contribution of land
DBC/Government/ONE/HCA/private sector	Funding of phased extension of the town centre into the Town Centre Fringe, including improvements in connections across the ring road
DBC	Town centre management and promotion
Monitoring Indicators	
Core BD4	Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses
Local 15	Amount of retail floorspace and vacancy rates in the town centre and district and local centres
Local 25	Amount of floorspace completed for town centre uses by type, by centre and for the borough as a whole

CS8: Further Retail Provision		
Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)		
Adding to Quality, A Development Strategy for Darlington Town Centre Commercial Street Development: Planning and Highway Requirements Feethams Planning & Development Brief	Development decisions. Development masterplans	control briefs/
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Means of Delivery	
Private sector/DBC	Private sector funding and construction of a retail-led scheme in Commercial Street area, with DBC contribution of land	
Private sector	Private sector funding and construction of any further retail floorspace.	
Monitoring Indicators		
Core BD4	Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses	
Local 15	Amount of retail floorspace and vacancy rates in the town centre and district and local centres	
Local 25	Amount of floorspace completed for town centre uses by type, by centre and for the borough as a whole	

CS9: District and Local Centres and Freestanding Local Facilities		
Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)		
Making Places DPD Design of New Development SPD	Development control decisions. Promotion of district and local centres through centre management.	
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Means of Delivery	
Private sector	Private sector funding and construction of retail floorspace	
Monitoring Indicators		
Core BD4	Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses	
Local 15	Amount of retail floorspace and vacancy rates in the town centre and district and local centres	
Local 25	Amount of floorspace completed for town centre uses by type, by centre and for the borough as a whole	

6. QUALITY HOUSING FOR ALL

6.0 Introduction

6.0.1 Housing is a fundamental human need and it is important to ensure that there is enough housing to accommodate the predicted increase in households over the next 15 years or so. It is also important to ensure that the housing is of the right size and type to meet local needs and aspirations, and is of a standard that is appropriate for the 21st century.

6.0.2 The policies set out in this section recognise the importance of the existing housing stock as well as new housing in meeting these needs and aspirations.

New Housing

6.1 The Context

6.1.1 Darlington has traditionally had a strong housing market and high levels of housebuilding compared to many other areas in the rest of the Tees Valley sub-region. Housing in Darlington has to meet the needs and aspirations of local people forming new households or seeking a different kind of property. It also has to meet the needs and aspirations of the working

people that the Borough hopes to attract to and/or retain in Darlington, to drive local economic growth.

6.1.2 The need for additional new housing in Darlington is therefore driven by three factors:

- (i) an increase in new household formation amongst the existing population;
- (ii) in-migration and the retention of young people and working age people associated with a positive economic outlook; and
- (iii) the replacement of obsolete housing stock.

¹Policy 28, Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, 2008.

6.1.3 All these factors have fed into the amount of new housing that should be provided in the Borough, that is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy¹ (RSS).

6.2 The Issues and Options Considered

1. How many new houses to plan for and when to build them ?

¹Policy 28, RSS

6.2.1 The RSS¹ indicates that over the period from 2004 to 2021, a total of 8675 net additional dwellings* need to be provided in Darlington Borough. Table 6.1 below sets out how the RSS apportions these across the Core Strategy Plan period; for the period 2021 to 2026, the average annual rate of provision in the years 2004-2021 has been applied, as indicated in the RSS¹.

*net additional dwellings = total dwellings completed minus demolitions

6.2.2 Work carried out for the SHLAA² indicated that a total of 2696 net additional dwellings will be provided in the period 2004 to 2011, taking account of actual and forecast completions. This is a shortfall of 979 dwellings against RSS requirements for that period. Because this shortfall needs to be made up in the RSS plan period, these will be apportioned equally across the years 2011-2021, amounting to a further 98 dwellings every year to 2021.

² Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), March 2009

Table 6.1: Net additional dwellings required, 2011-2026

	2004-11	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26
RSS average annual net additional dwellings required	525	340	265	395
Total net additional dwellings required in each period	3675	1700	1325	1975
Shortfall against RSS requirement	979			
Total net additional dwellings required (including meeting shortfall).	-	2190	1815	1975
Total net additional dwellings required 2011-2026		5979		

6.2.3 Consideration was given to phasing these dwellings in the period up to 2017, to support the achievement of Housing Growth Point (HGP) objectives. However, it was considered undeliverable, taking into account the likely continuation of lower than recent historic levels of house building in the early years of the plan period. Also, as part of the Tees Valley Housing Growth Point, the Borough was expected to accommodate additional new housing. This would amount to 160 dwellings in addition to the RSS requirement in the period 2011-16³. However, the focus of Housing Growth Point has shifted to 'unlocking' stalled housing sites as a means of accelerating housebuilding, rather than trying to bring forward new sites.

³The HGP committed the area to 20% uplift over the RSS Examination in Public Panel Report housing requirement figures –see www.northasteip.co.uk.

Therefore no additional completions are being forecast or planned for as a result of the Council's involvement in the Growth Point programme

⁴Lingfield Point (1200 dwellings), Neasham Road (160 dwellings) and Former DFC Ground (146 dwellings)

⁵£3 million funding secured from the Government, Oct 2009.

6.2.4 The SHLAA identifies that 1557 new dwellings could be delivered from existing planning permissions. Taking into account three more recent significant planning permissions⁴, and the Council's commitment to building 65 new houses by 2011⁵ this amounts to some 3063 new dwellings. Assuming no significant demolitions, this leaves about 2600 to be provided through the identification of new land for housing development. This is indicated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Apportionment of RSS Housing Requirement, 2004-2026

	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	Total
Total net additional dwellings required (including meeting shortfall).	2190	1815	1975	5980
Total dwellings committed in planning permissions granted.	2263	650	400	3313
Forecast demolitions	0	0	0	0
Outstanding net additional dwellings required.	-138	1165	1575	2602

6.2.5 Table 6.2 above also indicates that even without additional land allocations, there is sufficient housing land available to provide an adequate supply for the first five years of the plan period, as required by national planning policy⁶. Land for new housing will not be needed until the period 2016-2021 at the earliest.

⁶PPS3: Housing

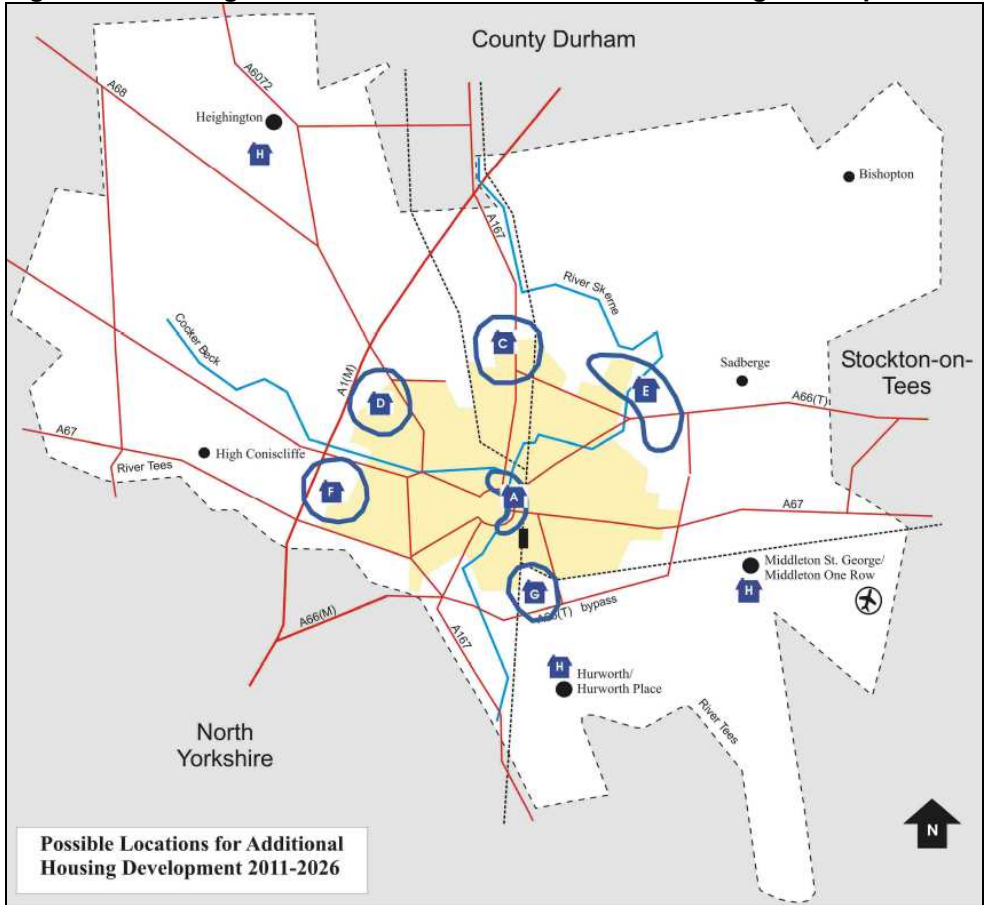
2. Where to provide new housing, and how to phase its delivery so that it meets a range of housing, planning and regeneration objectives ?

6.2.6 The approach to selecting the broad locations for new development, as set out in RSS⁷ is to give priority to accessible locations within the main built up area, particularly where it involves the reuse of previously developed land and buildings. Government planning policy⁶ sets out other matters, e.g. flood risk and deliverability that need to be taken into account in selecting locations for new housing development. These, together with local factors, have informed the selection of the matters that have been taken into account in identifying the strategic locations for new housing; some differentiate locations according to desirable outcomes, whilst others place limits on the amount or timing of new development, or indicate costs that would have to be overcome to achieve a sustainable and satisfactory form of development. A list of all the considerations is set out in Appendix 6.

⁷RSS Policy 4

6.2.7 Figure 6.1 identifies seven strategic locations that were assessed against the considerations set out in Appendix 6 to identify the most appropriate locations to accommodate new housing. The Town Centre Fringe (Area A) and Darlington Urban Area (Area B) emerged as the most appropriate locations for new housing.

Figure 6.1: Strategic Locations Considered for New Housing Development



Revised plan needed here

6.2.8 In accordance with RSS and national planning policy, the only option considered for these areas was to apportion as much new housing as possible to these locations, taking account of other regeneration objectives for the area and delivery constraints. The SHLAA identified that about 700 new homes could be delivered on a range of suitable, available and achievable sites within the Darlington Urban Area up to 2021, such as surplus school sites and obsolete employment land. It is estimated that a further 650 could be delivered in the Town Centre Fringe area, as part of the overall mixed use regeneration of the area, guided by an Area Action Plan⁸ and other appropriate planning frameworks. Phasing is proposed towards the latter half of the plan period, to take account of the constraints, the further planning work required, and the need to ensure that new housing here does not undermine the regeneration of the neighbouring Central Park area.

⁸Town Centre Fringe Area Action Plan – see the Local Development Scheme for more details, www.darlington.gov.uk

⁹Policy 4, RSS

⁹RSS Policy 4

¹⁰This is the southern part of the North Eastern Urban Fringe area identified on Figure 6.1

¹¹Hurworth/Hurworth Place, Middleton St. George and Heighington

*see the Council's LDS 2009-2012 for timetable of preparation.

6.2.9 In accordance with the RSS sequential approach⁹, the remainder of the housing land required is proposed on greenfield land on the edge of the main urban area. Of the five strategic location options around the urban fringe considered, the North West Urban Fringe was considered the most appropriate and then the Eastern Urban Fringe¹⁰, and are proposed to accommodate 600 and 200 new houses respectively. The phasing of housing in these locations will ensure that they are not brought forward in advance of the substantial completion of more sustainably located existing commitments in these areas (West Park and Lingfield).

6.2.10 In accordance with RSS, lowest priority was given to the larger villages¹¹ as strategic locations for new housing development. The Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document* will establish whether any small scale individual sites on the edge of these villages need to be identified to meet local needs or to sustain local shops and services.

3. How to make the best use of housing land ?

6.2.11 In order to minimise the amount of greenfield land that has to be allocated for new development, it is important to achieve the highest development densities possible on all those sites that are allocated, particularly those in the most accessible locations. The Town Centre and the Town Centre Fringe are the most accessible locations in the Borough. Together with the areas around North Road Station, around the district and local centres¹², and along the key public transport corridors identified in Policy CS19, these will be the locations where higher density development will be expected, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Design of New Development SPD, or any successor¹³. Lower densities may be acceptable in parts of the strategic locations around the urban fringe and on some small infill sites in suburban or rural locations, particularly where the proposed developments would meet the need for executive housing or the larger dwellings needed to better balance the overall housing stock¹⁴.

¹²See revised draft policy CS9.

¹³Design of New Development Supplementary Planning Document, DBC, July 2009.

¹⁴Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2009.

6.2.12 In accordance with RSS, it is proposed that schemes will be required to be built so that an average density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare across the Borough as a whole is achieved.

Earlier Options Considered

6.2.13 The options set out in the Issues and Options Report¹⁵ have been overtaken by the publication of the RSS, the downturn in the housing market and the award of Housing Growth Point status to the Tees Valley. Two options about amount and phasing of new development have since been considered (see 6.2.3 above):

- (i) general conformity with the RSS and reflecting the Housing Growth Point aspiration to accelerate housing delivery;
- (ii) general conformity with the RSS and reflecting the actual and delivery of the Housing Growth Point Programme

¹⁵See Issue 9, LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

6.2.14 Further options (see paras 6.2.7 to 6.2.10 above) have also been considered as to where new housing development could be accommodated, because the number of new houses needed has risen substantially since the Issues and Options report was prepared. The options appraisal¹⁶ also considered different patterns of phasing, taking into account the need for new house building to support as wide a range of planning, housing and regeneration objectives as possible.

¹⁶See background document 'LDF Core Strategy New Housing Development: Selecting the Preferred Option'.

6.3 Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

6.3.1 Sustainability appraisal found the Town Centre Fringe and Darlington Urban Area strategic locations (see Figure 6.1) to be the most sustainable for new housing, followed by the North Western Urban Fringe and the North Eastern Urban Fringe. In all locations a range of measures would need to be included in any new development to mitigate adverse environmental and social impacts, such as traffic congestion.

6.3.2 During consultations, several sites around the urban fringe were put forward by respondents as strategic locations for new housing. These have been encompassed in the broad locations identified in Figure 6.1, on which the options appraisal has been undertaken¹⁶.

6.3.3 Other comments received indicated that more needs to be made of the priority that will be given to using previously developed land and how much new housing will be accommodated in each location. It was also suggested that a differentiation be made between service villages and other

villages, with the former having some potential for further development, and that the policy needs to be flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances, and be deliverable.

6.3.4 Because most new housing proposed will be in the Town Centre Fringe and Darlington Urban Area, where the majority of housing opportunities are on previously developed land¹⁷ (PDL), the preferred option is expect to deliver about XX % of new homes on previously developed land in the first part of the plan period, contributing towards meeting and sustaining the regional target of 75% by 2016¹⁸. However, as the Borough's supply of PDL diminishes, and greenfield urban fringe locations are developed, it will become more difficult to contribute positively contribute to the sustaining housing delivery to meet the PDL target. **Figure 6.2** sets out the forecast completions on PDL as a proportion of overall housing delivery over the Core Strategy plan period.

Figure 6.2: Previously Developed Land Trajectory, 2011-2026

(TO INSERT)

6.3.5 A Housing Implementation Strategy¹⁹ sets out the steps that the Council will take to ensure that the delivery of new homes on PDL reaches the RSS target and remains at a high level, and that where there are problems with housing delivery in a particular locations, how the Council will ensure that delivery is possible in the next most sustainable alternative locations.

6.3.6 Taking into account all the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is one that concentrates new housing development in accessible locations in the main built up area, particularly making use of previously developed land, with additional new housing required on greenfield land at two strategic locations at the urban fringe, in the middle to later parts of the plan period. This is expressed in revised draft policy CS10.

¹⁷Previously developed land is defined in PPS3: Housing and includes land and buildings.

¹⁸RSS Policy 29

¹⁹The Housing Implementation Strategy is in Appendix 7.

²⁰Years are 1st April - 31st March

Revised Draft Policy CS10: New Housing Development

Provision will be made for average annual net additions to the dwelling stock, for the years²⁰ 2011-2026, as follows:

2011 - 2016:	about 350
2016 - 2021:	about 250
2021 - 2026:	about 400

Land for new housing will be allocated in the following strategic locations, in accordance with the locational strategy set out in draft revised Policy CS1, with priority for delivery being the order and timing of delivery indicated below:

	Number of new dwellings		
	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26
(a) Darlington Urban Area	0	600	150 ²¹
(b) Town Centre Fringe	0	300	450
(c) North Western Urban Fringe	0	100	500
(d) Eastern Urban Fringe	0	0	200

This new land is in addition to housing development in the following locations that is expected to be met through existing commitments:

	Number of new dwellings		
	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26
(i) Darlington Urban Area	950	250	0
(ii) Central Park	350	250	0
(iii) Lingfield Point	400	400	400
(iv) West Park	400	0	0
(v) Others	150	0	

Where housing delivery does not come forward as envisaged, housing delivery will be maintained by bringing forward development in the next priority location, as outlined in (a) to (d) above, so as to contribute to meeting the regional target for 75% of new housing to be on previously developed land by 2016.

Average housing density on new developments across the Borough will be expected to achieve 30-50 dwellings per hectare overall. Higher densities will be encouraged within and on the fringe of Darlington Town Centre, around North Road railway station, around district and local centres identified in revised draft policy CS9, and along the key public transport corridors, identified in revised draft Policy CS19.

²¹Windfalls, i.e. previously developed sites that unexpectedly become available. Forecast based on recent historic rates.

6.4 Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

6.4.1 The delivery of new housing is monitored on a quarterly basis, and the findings of monitoring will inform the actions set out in the Housing Implementation Strategy (see Appendix 7) to help ensure Policy CS10 above is implemented in full throughout the Core Strategy period.

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)

Accommodating Growth DPD Town Centre Fringe AAP Affordable Housing SPD	Development Control decisions Darlington Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Tees Valley Housing Growth Point Programme of Development, 2008
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Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	Allocation of land for new development and through on site provision, including the Town Centre Fringe
DBC/Fabrick/Keepmoat/Yuill	Using HCA/ONE/Housing Growth Point funding to bring forward Central Park, surplus school sites, housing sites, sites for development in the town centre and the Town Centre Fringe.
DBC	Using HCA Local Authority Housing Programme funding to deliver new social rented homes on Council owned land; £3million secured from Round 1 for 62 units to be completed by 2011.
Private sector housebuilders Registered Social Landlords	Private sector housebuilder resources Using RSL resources and grants from HCA to provide affordable housing. In some cases using land provided by private housebuilders in lieu of making affordable housing provision.
Monitoring Indicators	
NI154	Net additional homes provided
LI0001	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land
Local 4	Current commitments on greenfield and PDL
Local 5	Density of new dwellings on completed and committed sites of 5 dwellings or more
New	Location of completed sites with higher than average density

6.5 MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

The Context

6.5.1 New housing is required to meet the needs and demand arising from the local people at all stages of their life, and to accommodate and retain the people needed to underpin the Borough's economic growth. It is projected that there will be an increase in single person households, an increase in the working age population and significant growth in the retired population of Darlington during the next 15 years or so.

Table 6.5.1: Projected Changes in Population and Households in Darlington Borough

Population Segment	2011	2016	2021	2026
Total population	101,000	104,400	107,900	111,300
Working age population	61,100	61,700	62,200	62,600
Population 65 years or older	17.9%	20.2%	22.0%	24.3%
Households	46,000	48,000	50,000	51,000

Sources: ONS revised sub-regional household projections, Feb 2008
ONS 2006 based sub-national population projections.
Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit statistics.

6.5.2 These changes in the size and composition of population and households have implications for the amount and type of new housing that is required.

The Issues

1. How to ensure that the size and type of dwellings in the Borough will meet overall needs and aspirations

6.5.3 Based on projected household sizes, the apparent need is for smaller (one and two bedroom) housing, but local research carried out to inform the TVSHMA¹ found that households want more space than is required to meet their essential needs, to reflect increasing prosperity and changing lifestyles. This trend is reducing the need for people to move as family units grow, reducing the turnover of housing and incidence of vacant property.

6.5.4 Most people will find the home they need from the existing housing stock, and the Borough has relatively low levels of homelessness². However,

¹ Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2009.

² In 2008/09, 18 households were identified as being homeless and in priority need; this figure was 11 in 2007/08, DBC own data.

the composition of the existing stock in Darlington does not match needs and aspirations, with fewer detached houses, bungalows and 4+ bed roomed homes than are sought, and more semi-detached houses, terraced houses and flats than are sought (see Table 6.5.2).

Table 6.5.2 : Composition of Existing Housing Stock and Household Aspirations

Size/type of dwelling	Proportion of the existing housing stock (%)	Type of housing people living in the Borough aspire to (%)
Detached	16.2	18.6
Semi-detached	34.9	22.2
Terraced	29.7	27.4
Bungalow	8.9	18.4
Flat	10.3	13.4
1 bed	8.4	6.9
2 bed	33.1	35.2
3 bed	41.3	36.0
4 or more bed	17.2	21.9

Source: Tables 6.3 and 7.1 TVSHMA, 2009

2. How to provide enough suitable affordable housing³ to meet needs

³The definition of affordable housing is set out in Annex B of PPS3: Housing (CLG, 2006)

6.5.5 This was identified as a significant issue for Darlington in 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'. Despite 7500 housing units being in the control of the Council or Registered Social Landlords, the TVSHMA found that, even assuming lower quartile house prices 20% below the 2007 peak, there would be a shortfall of 513 dwellings per annum. This is the largest affordable housing shortfall in the Tees Valley, and exceeds the Borough's annual requirement for new housing set out in the RSS. However, it does not take account of the contribution the private rented sector makes to meeting affordable housing needs.

6.5.6 A range of sizes and types of new affordable housing are needed, including two bed homes for older people. Also, whilst there are unmet affordable housing needs across the Borough, the problem is most acute in the rural areas, and in the south-west of the urban area (see Figure 6.5.1).

(insert fig 6.5.1 - AH SPD)

⁴The definition of intermediate affordable housing is given in Annex B of PPS3: Housing (CLG, 2006).

⁵The Fabrick Housing Group are promoting intermediate market rental as a short term housing option to allow households to save towards a mortgage deposit that will enable them to owner occupy the property in the longer term.

6.5.7 Pressure on the affordable housing stock is predicted to remain at a very high level during the early part of the plan period, because of lower rates of turnover and vacancy in the social rented stock and reduced levels of mortgage lending to those that could otherwise afford to buy a home. The Borough's 3144 private rented sector dwellings are anticipated to continue to meet some of unmet affordable housing needs, but the quality of some of this stock puts its long-term contribution in doubt. In contrast, there is expected to be sustained higher demand for intermediate affordable housing⁴, with schemes like that proposed by Fabrick Housing Group⁵, at the former Beaumont Hill School sites, likely to feature more prominently in the overall new housing supply.

3. How to meeting the housing needs of an ageing population

*Darlington Housing Strategy 2008-2012, outlines how local partners will work together to provide housing in Darlington that is decent, reasonably priced and in places where people want to live and work.

6.5.8 This was identified as a significant issue in Darlington in 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', and in earlier Core Strategy consultations. A higher proportion of the stock needs to be suitable for and attractive to older people and people with disabilities. As people get older, most want to remain in their home, though recognising that they may need greater support to do so, and may need adaptations to their home. To reflect this, the Darlington Housing Strategy 2008-12* highlights the need to sustain independent living

amongst the Borough's increasingly elderly population, largely through the existing stock, and through the provision of extra care housing. As regards new build, the TVSHMA found a particular interest amongst older people in Darlington for sheltered accommodation and buying an apartment in a specific older persons' development, and for bungalows in all areas of the Borough. Lifetime homes, or modern purpose built or easily adapted dwellings can also meet some of these needs.

⁶Top-end executive housing is set in its own grounds at a density of no more than 6 dwellings per hectare. It has 4 or more bedrooms, above average levels of garaging, security and privacy and individual, high quality designs and finishings. It comprises both new and older period homes.

⁷Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009.

⁸Issue 11, LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, Jan 2008

4. How to provide housing attractive to people coming to live and work in Darlington and the Tees Valley.

6.5.9 In recent decades, the Borough has played a role in meeting a sub-regional need for top-end executive housing⁶, because of its attractive urban and rural residential environments and town centre cultural and leisure facilities. Although only a small part of the overall housing market, a lack of supply of executive housing can act as a barrier to economic growth. A need and demand for this type of housing exists in the Tees Valley, and developers have confirmed that there would be a market for product led executive housing in the Darlington area⁷.

Options Considered

6.5.10 Different types of housing formed the options for addressing issues 1-3 above. The options⁸ were:

- (a) affordable housing;
- (b) lifetime homes
- (c) live-work housing; or
- (d) a combination.

6.5.11 In response to the findings of the TVSHMA, executive housing and housing sizes and types to support economic growth have also been considered, and in response to consultation responses, the alternative of meeting lifetime housing needs within the housing stock generally rather than in 'lifetime' homes was also considered.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

6.5.12 Sustainability appraisal found option (d) above to be the most sustainable, with particularly positive social impacts. Possible negative environmental impacts would be mitigated by applying other policies in this document.

6.5.13 Comments made in developing this policy also highlighted that the provision of lifetime homes, whilst having positive social impacts, could have negative impacts too, as the costs of providing it may absorb money available for other social needs, such as affordable housing, and because greater internal space requirements make homes more expensive to buy and require more land overall for new housing. However, there is a very significant cost to adapting existing housing where no thought has been given to future needs.

6.5.14 Rather than requiring lifetime homes as part of the housing mix, the Council has therefore included in the revised draft policy a clause for housing that is capable of being readily adapted to meet a range of needs. This could be in addition to providing housing for disabled people where needs have been identified. A separate document will set out the detail of the adaptable dwellings requirement. Developer contributions may also be sought in some circumstances to help ensure more of the existing housing stock can be adapted to be suitable for an ageing population (see Policy CS4).

⁹Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, April 2007. Work is underway to complete an assessment of the economic viability of housing land.

¹⁰ Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009.

¹¹A rural exceptions policy allows housing development outside village limits, where it is for local needs and will be affordable in perpetuity.

6.5.15 The revised draft policy retains the targets for affordable housing provision set out in the adopted Affordable Housing SPD⁹, because it has been found to be robustly justified in terms of housing need¹⁰ and because the guidance has been flexible enough to remain workable during the current weakening of the local housing market. To respond to the forecast increase in demand for intermediate housing, the draft policy slightly increases the percentage of affordable housing that will need to be delivered as intermediate rather than social rented housing from the levels currently set out in the Affordable Housing SPD. This is notwithstanding the reduced appetite of lenders to offer mortgages for such products in the current economic conditions.

6.5.16 Both encouraging executive housing and providing larger detached housing will have social, economic and environmental benefits, allowing more people to live and work in Darlington, reducing the need for commuting into and out of the Borough. To ensure that sufficient land is identified in appropriate locations, consideration will be given in the preparation of the Accommodating Growth DPD to identifying sites for specific types of housing, e.g. rural affordable housing, housing for people with disabilities and executive housing. If significant rural affordable housing needs are forecast for particular settlements in the future, the Council will consider including a 'rural exceptions'¹¹ policy in the Making Places DPD'

6.5.17 Taking into account all the above, the Council's revised preferred option is an enhanced option (d). This may be subject to further change and consultation following completion of an assessment of the economic viability of housing land.

Revised Draft Policy CS11: Meeting Housing Needs

New housing and the conversion and adaptation of existing dwellings will be required to contribute to achieving an overall balanced housing stock that better meets local needs and aspirations, particularly the needs of an ageing population and increasing affordable housing provision.

All developments of 15 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more within the main urban area and 5 dwellings (or 0.2ha) or more outside of it will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, an appropriate mix of housing to meet identified shortfalls of dwelling types, sizes and tenures. The mix should include:

- Affordable housing, in accordance with the following targets for provision:
 - (a) 40% in areas of acute need
 - (b) 30% in areas of high need;
 - (c) 15% in areas of moderate need,
 - (d) in all areas to achieve a 80%: 20% social rented: intermediate tenure split.
- Housing for people with disabilities;
- Housing for older people, including housing capable of being readily adapted to meet a range of needs;
- Detached family housing containing four or more bedrooms in all appropriate locations.

The exact mix of provision will be negotiated with developers on the basis of up-to-date evidence of housing needs and aspirations, the size, type and tenure of the existing and committed stock and development viability.

Exceptionally, where it is not appropriate to make provision on-site, developers will be expected to enter into a Section 106 agreement to secure the equivalent off-site provision, either on other sites allocated for specific needs in the Accommodating Growth DPD or through conversions of or adaptations to the existing stock.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Affordable Housing SPD Planning Obligations SPD Design of New Development SPD	Darlington Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Older Person Housing Strategy 2007 Homelessness Strategy Development Control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Building control decisions
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Means of Delivery
DBC	£3 million government funding to deliver 65 affordable housing units by 2011 £206, 000 Community Infrastructure Funding and £4.1million Kickstart public sector funding to deliver housing at the former Beaumont Hill School sites
DBC/Tees Valley Living/ Fabrick Housing Group DBC/RSLs	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new affordable and/or lifetime housing
DBC	£10 million annually from the Housing Investment Programme to meet other identified housing needs
DBC	Disbursement of Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt existing dwellings
DBC	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to adapt

DBC DBC/agencies/voluntary sector	existing housing and/or to improve the energy efficiency of existing housing Bidding for share of Tees Valley Single Housing Investment Programme from 2011 Provision of temporary accommodation for the homeless
Monitoring indicators	
NI155/ Core H5 Local H2b New	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) Dwellings completed and committed by size, type and tenure Number of homes benefitting from adaptations funded by Disabilities Facilities Grant

6.6 EXISTING HOUSING

The Context

¹Sources: Housing Strategy
Statistical Appendix 2009, and
Tees Valley Strategic Housing
Market Assessment 2008.

6.6.1 Darlington Borough's existing housing stock of some 48,000 dwellings is made up of a high proportion of older dwellings. 30% of housing is terraced, and just over 40% only have one or two bedrooms. Semi-detached properties make up 35% of the total housing stock, and whilst there has been significant recent construction activity, flats make up only 10% of the overall housing stock¹.

6.6.2 The existing housing stock and neighbourhoods are, and will continue to be, the cornerstone of Darlington's housing offer, satisfying the majority of housing needs and choices. Maximising the contribution of the existing stock will help to reduce the use of new areas of land for housing, and by making the most of the natural resources locked up in building materials, it will reduce the demand for new raw materials and energy.

The Issues

1. How to achieve good quality housing and residential environments across the Borough.

6.6.3 Within the Borough, there are high quality residential environments to the west and south-west of the town centre, within the Borough's villages, and increasingly in the north-west of the Borough. These are in stark contrast to the pockets of poor quality older private housing stock and residential environments that can be found in inner urban areas to the north and east of the town centre and in the North Road area. There are significant concentrations of social housing on the north-west, southern and eastern fringes of the main urban area, providing affordable housing choice.

2. How to manage vacancy levels to achieve the RSS 2011 target of 3%, whilst still providing opportunities for people to move.

6.6.4 Housing vacancy across the Borough is currently 3.4%, which is lower than the regional level (3.8%) but higher than the England average (3.0%) and the RSS ceiling target of 3% by 2011. Table 6.6.1 shows that vacancy is highest in the private sector housing stock.

Table 6.6.1: Housing Vacancy Rates in the Existing Housing Stock

	Total Stock	No. Vacant Units	% vacancy
DBC stock	5440	88	1.6%
RSL stock*	2100	40	1.9%
Private stock	40,483	1801	4.4%
Total stock	48,023	1860	3.8%

Sources: HSSA 2009, *HSSA2008

²Sub-regional choice based lettings is promoting vacancies within the local authority housing stock initially, but will include vacancies within the private rented sector shortly.

6.6.5 The low level of vacancies in the social rented stock has reduced the opportunities for people to move within and into this sector. This is likely to remain an issue, particularly during the early years of the plan period, although the introduction of sub-regional choice based lettings policy² in July 2009 increased consumer choice across the region and will reduce the time properties are vacant. Vacancies within the private housing stock are slightly higher than the level required to allow people to move within and into this sector, but as housing choice improves, persistent vacancy is likely to emerge as an issue in the poorest quality older terraced housing areas, where properties and the environment fall short of 21st Century aspirations. Long term vacant homes are often neglected and of poor quality; reducing vacancies can also improve the appearance of an area, helping to raise the overall quality of housing in the Borough, and reduce the need for new housing. However, vacancies in the form of newly completed dwellings will still be needed to enable people to move within the Borough.

The Options Considered

³See Option 12 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

6.6.6 The poorest quality housing and residential environments are areas of small, older terraced housing. Four options were considered³ for improving older housing:

- a) through market intervention
- b) through planning obligations
- c) through cross-subsidy; or
- d) through a combination of these.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

6.6.7 Sustainability appraisal found option (d) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the consequential adverse impacts of reducing housing choice and the limited circumstances in which planning obligations could be sought.

6.6.8 Comments made during the development of draft policies have highlighted the need to establish whether housing could be repaired, adapted or redeveloped, prior to considering its demolition, ensuring that any planning obligations sought from developers towards the cost of improving existing housing are related to their proposed development, and to prioritise energy efficiency in undertaking works to improve the existing housing stock.

⁴Source: DBC Private Rented Housing Stock Condition Survey 2008.

6.6.9 The Council has also identified⁴ four priority investment areas for private rented stock: Northgate, North Road, Bank Top and Central wards (see Figure 6.6.1). However, there will be instances, e.g. some solid wall properties, where the nature of construction of houses is such that it may be more cost effective to demolish than to insulate in situ.

Figure 6.6.1: Priority Investment Areas for Private Rented and Council-owned Stock

(insert fig)

⁵Darlington Standard is ... AG to provide

6.6.10 The Council is also keen to nurture the estates where its own stock predominates, so that they provide housing choice in long term sustainable communities. In doing so, it will take opportunities to improve residential environments and housing quality, including upgrading properties to achieve the enhanced 'Darlington Standard'⁵ for decent homes.

6.6.11 The Council may also take opportunities to diversify existing housing tenure through selective demolition and redevelopment. It will focus on

removing obsolete or low demand housing stock and replacing and remodeling existing dwellings with modern housing, for which there is an identified local housing demand, particularly the creation of larger family homes and the removal/conversion of single person dwellings to dwellings suitable for a minimum of 2 people. The areas identified as priorities for this are Parkside, Branksome and Red Hall, within the wards identified in Figure 6.6.1.

6.6.12 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is Option (d), and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS12.

Revised Draft Policy CS12: Existing Housing

The Council will continue to work towards achieving and maintaining a maximum of 3% of vacancies in the existing housing stock. It will do this by:

- (i) supporting the regeneration and improvement of existing housing areas, particularly in the North Road, Town Centre Fringe, Parkside, Red Hall and Branksome residential areas;
- (ii) giving priority to repairing, adapting or remodelling existing housing, particularly to improve energy efficiency and to ensure public housing meets the 'Darlington Standard', where this is financially viable. Estate layouts and the local environment will also be enhanced where appropriate.

Exceptionally, selective demolition and redevelopment may form part of a housing regeneration strategy, where:

- (a) there is evidence of sustained low demand and obsolescence;
- (b) it would prevent further decline;
- (c) repair, adaptation and remodelling have been considered and ruled out;
- (d) it diversifies existing housing tenure in the neighbourhood;
- (e) it accords with the overall planning framework for the area.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Town Centre Fringe AAP Planning Obligations SPD	Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, 2008 Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Development Control decisions
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC DBC DBC/Regional Housing Board/ Single Housing Investment Programme/ Central Government	Appropriate interventions according to a planning or regeneration framework drawn up with the involvement of the local communities affected Making loans to people to carry out repairs to privately owned houses. Planned repairs to Council owned housing funded from Major Repairs Allowance, prudential borrowing supported by the Housing Revenue Account and other grant funding; totalling approximately £8 million per year until 2014 when will reduce to £5-6 million per annum.
Monitoring Indicators	
Local 8 New New	Number of vacant dwellings by length of vacancy and ownership type. Number of Council owned houses where planned repairs have been completed Overall vacancy rate in the existing housing stock

6.7 ACCOMMODATING TRAVELLING GROUPS

The Context

¹The definitions of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are set out in Government Circulars 01/06 and 04/07

6.7.1 Darlington has a long association with Gypsies and other travelling groups¹, with people from these groups accommodated on dedicated sites and within general housing. Existing provision is at two successful Council owned, but privately managed sites, Honeypot Lane (with 32 residential pitches and 24 transit pitches) and Neasham Road (with 20 residential pitches), and at other smaller privately owned sites with planning permission. There are also a number of unauthorised encampments each year throughout the Borough.

²Policy 30 of The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (July 2008)

6.7.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requires local housing authorities to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to their district and prepare a strategy to meet these needs². The RSS identifies that a total of 74 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers will be needed across the Tees Valley by 2020. A sub-regional study (the accommodation needs assessment³) has been carried out, to provide additional evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and other travelling groups across the Tees Valley, focussing on each specific Borough.

³Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment: Final Report, January 2009

⁴Circular 01/06: Planning for Gypsies and Travellers provides guidance on the planning aspects of locating sites for Gypsies and Travellers. Circular 04/07: Planning for Travelling Showpeople is also relevant

6.7.3 The RSS¹ requires Local Development Frameworks to provide the criteria following the plan, monitor and manage and sequential approaches for the provision and release of pitches for the Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople communities, and, where appropriate, identify locations for these pitches. There is specific government policy⁴ on the planning aspects of locating sites for Gypsies and Travellers, and for meeting the specific needs of Travelling Showpeople, who can often require sites for a mixed business and residential use with facilities to repair and store significant amounts of equipment. The aim of the policy is to enhance the health and education standards of these families and ensure access to good quality accommodation.

The Issues

1. Where should Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's needs be accommodated?

6.7.4 The accommodation needs assessment found no signs that the growth in the travelling population will slow significantly, and confirmed that, at a local level, there is a need for additional sites, over and above the existing Council sites and private sites, and that the need will continue to grow unless additional provision is made. Further work will be undertaken to identify the number of additional pitches that will be required in the Darlington Local Authority area.

The Options Considered

6.7.5 Four options around where to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople were set out in the Issues and Options⁵ report:

- (a) Provision on existing Council sites and private sites only;
- (b) Provision on new or extended Council and private sites;
- (c) Provision on additional transit sites;
- (d) A combination of the above.

⁵See Options 13A-13D of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

6.7.6 Sustainability Appraisal found option (a) to have the most positive environmental impact. The other options were considered to have potential negative environmental impacts, but could generate positive social and economic impacts (health, well being). With a shortfall in provision being identified in the evidence base, Option B was considered to be the most environmentally and social beneficial option.

6.7.7 Views expressed during the development of draft policies were that needs should be accommodated on existing Council owned and private sites only, though a number of comments suggested that any existing or future provision needed an element of flexibility and that there may well be a need for additional transit sites.

6.7.8 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is Option B, and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS12. This accords with the national and regional policy approach, and accords with the 'valuing diversity' strand of the sustainable community strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.

Revised Draft Policy CS13: Accommodating Travelling Groups

Provision will be made for travelling groups at the existing sites of Honeypot Lane, Neasham Road, and other small sites within the Borough. Where required, additional sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria, ensuring that sites;

- a) have appropriate access and are in a sustainable location for schools, shops, employment opportunities and other local facilities and services; and
- b) are located and designed so as not to have a significant negative impact on existing residential amenity or existing landscape amenity; and
- c) Are located and designed so as not to have a significant negative impact on the natural, archaeological or historic environment.

Preference will given firstly to locations within and then adjacent to existing settlements, and then to the re-use of brownfield land in other locations.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

⁶See the Councils Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the timetable for the preparation of the Accommodating Growth DPD

6.7.9 The identification of new sites to accommodate the identified local requirements will take place through the forthcoming Accommodating Growth Development Plan Document (DPD)⁶.

6.7.10 The Council will establish local requirements by working with the other Tees Valley Authorities to take a strategic and joined-up approach to the delivery of sites. An annual review of the level of accommodation across the Borough shall be conducted. The Council will talk to all those affected to ensure that their views are taken into account in the delivery of sites.

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2009	Development Control Decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	Bidding for HCA grants, where appropriate for sites with planning permission, for the development of new sites and for refurbishment, including remodelling and extension of existing sites.
DBC	Allocation of land for new development
Monitoring Indicators	
H4	Net additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches
Local 7	Number of additional pitches included in development plans

7. A DISTINCTIVE, GREENER, CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

7.1 LOCAL CHARACTER AND DISTINCTIVENESS

Context

7.1.1 Darlington is a traditional market town surrounded by countryside. The Borough's distinctive historic, built and natural townscapes and landscapes, interspersed with attractive villages, create a unique environment that attracts people to live and work here, and to visit.

7.1.2 Complementary built and natural features reflect the gradual evolution of Darlington over time, and are an important and highly valued part of local identity, creating local civic pride. Darlington's friendly market town character is recognised in One Darlington: Perfectly Placed¹ and it includes a commitment to look after that character. Protecting and reinforcing Darlington's distinctive character will ensure a high quality, vibrant and visually rich environment for future generations.

¹One Darlington: Perfectly Placed is the sustainable community strategy for Darlington, published in 2008.

The Issues

Which parts of Darlington's built heritage to protect and enhance?

7.1.3 The subtleties of the Borough's distinctive built environment are found in a combination of heritage sites, landmarks and townscapes. These reflect its development as a market town with an influential industrial and railway heritage, Victorian suburbs and agricultural settlements.

7.1.4 There is a wide range of heritage assets, including over 500 listed buildings and 20 scheduled ancient monuments, like the archaeological remains of a Roman fort at Piercebridge, which are protected by national legislation. These are complemented by 16 locally designated Conservation Areas, protecting areas of local character and heritage. In the long term, locally distinctive buildings and structures with high historic and architectural value will also be protected from inappropriate development through the establishment of a Local List.

²Conservation Area Character Appraisals, DBC: Character includes both listed buildings and locally distinctive buildings and intrinsic characteristics, like historic road and path layouts, building and paving materials, public and private spaces, greens and trees.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals identify the historic, archaeological, architectural, spatial and natural components that contribute most to each Conservation Area's character². In the town centre, the Victorian and

medieval skyline, with its landmark buildings like the Market Hall and Station clock towers, as well as the parish church clock towers in the villages, are a distinctive part of the modern day skyline, and the Borough's tree canopy, particularly in the south west of the urban area, also provides a distinct sense of place.

Which key landscape features to protect and enhance?

7.1.5 Three natural landscape areas (see Figure 7.1.1), arising from the interaction of geology, topography, river systems, farming and land ownership patterns have created Darlington's distinctive natural landscape. The Tees Lowland³ dominates, with its gently undulating, predominantly agricultural land, providing wide, distinctive views to the North York Moors and the upland Dales, and from the urban fringe to the surrounding villages and countryside. A key feature is the steep sided, wooded banks leading to the River Tees, which meanders along the Borough's southern boundary.

³A Natural Area as defined by Natural England

7.1.6 The locally prominent Durham Magnesian Limestone Escarpment³ lies in the north east; a gently undulating plateau of open, mostly arable farmland, home to a unique natural environment including rare and distinctive grasslands and species. Overlapping with this is a small part of the undulating Northumbria Coal Measures³, with limited semi-natural habitats and woodlands featuring alongside rivers and becks.

Figure 7.1 : Natural Areas in Darlington Borough
Insert (fig 7.1.1 Natural Areas)

7.1.7 These natural landscapes are reinforced by the clear boundaries between the urban area, the villages and the countryside. Different neighbourhoods have formed, each with a distinct character, reflecting their historic origins.

⁴Parks and gardens: historic or natural interest, with town wide amenity and recreation value created by man over time as ornamental or designed landscapes.

7.1.8 Within these areas are ten historic ornamental parklands⁴, like South Park and North Lodge Park in the urban area, and the seven rural parklands like Newbus Grange, Hurworth and Neasham Hall, whose character also contributes significantly to the Borough's unique identity.

Which elements of the natural environment to protect and enhance?

7.1.9 A network of green corridors, woodland areas and sites for recreation and nature cross the urban area, providing important travel routes within the urban area, and link the urban fringe to the countryside. All these complementary spaces have value; some spaces, like Local Wildlife Sites, are important as locations for priority habitats and wildlife (see Policy CS15), others have historic value like South Park and North Lodge Park. Some greenspaces like Cocker Beck are mostly for recreation, providing breathing space within the built up areas for the community to relax or exercise.

The Options Considered

7.1.10 Several options for protecting and improving the quality of Darlington's townscapes and landscapes were considered⁵:

- (a) improving the appearance of key corridors and gateway sites;
- (b) prioritising contaminated, unused or underused sites for use;
- (c) promoting heritage based schemes in areas like Northgate and the near the railway station;
- (d) preserving and enhancing statutory historic and environmental buildings and features;

⁵See Option 4, 19, 20, 21, 22 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

- (e) protecting and improving key townscape, landscape and historic features;
- (f) combination of (c)-(e);
- (g) promoting varied agricultural practice in a high quality landscape;
- (h) protecting and improving a network of green sites and corridors;
- (i) protecting existing tree cover;
- (j) protecting existing tree cover and provide new trees at key sites, urban fringe and gateways sites; and
- (k) maintain and protect healthy trees, promote replacement planting and new planting at the community forest and areas with low cover.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

7.1.11 Sustainability appraisal found options (a) (d) (f) (g) (h) (k) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the need for new tree cover to appear natural, rather than formal, to complement the natural landscape, and for renewable energy generation near to or at heritage sites to be well designed to avoid detracting or impacting on such features.

7.1.12 Comments made during consultations asked for the Natural Areas to be identified as the landscape character areas for the Borough, for more weight to be given to the local historic environment, and to eliminate overlap with biodiversity policy elsewhere in the Core Strategy.

7.1.13 The Equalities Impact Assessment⁶ noted that the conservation of historic buildings, particularly those with public access, needs to be balanced with accommodating the needs of disabled people and other potentially disadvantaged groups.

7.1.14 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is a combination of options (a) (d) (f) (g) (h) (k). This is expressed in revised draft policy CS14.

⁶Published on
www.darlington.gov.uk

Policy CS14: Local Character and Distinctiveness

The distinctive qualities of the Borough’s built and natural townscapes and landscapes will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to positively contribute to the character of the Borough to promote a strong sense of place. This will include:

- (i) Protecting and improving the distinctive characteristics of Darlington town centre, the urban area and the countryside including:
 - (a) The character and appearance of the central area skyline such as the landmarks of the Market and Station clocktowers, St Cuthbert’s spire and St John’s Tower;
 - (b) The tree canopy skyline, such as in the south west of the urban area;
 - (c) The green corridors of the River Skerne, Staindrop Road and the Denes, Firthmoor and McMullen Road, the Stockton and Darlington railway trackbed, the Faverdale Black path and Barnard Castle railway trackbed, Cockerbeck and Baydale Beck;
 - (d) Views along the approaches to the urban area, such as along Grange Road, Coniscliffe Road and Staindrop Road/Woodland Road;
 - (e) The appearance and environmental value of Grade 1, 2, 3 agricultural land;
- (ii) Protecting and enhancing the distinct landscape character of:
 - (f) The Tees Lowlands;
 - (g) Durham Magnesian limestone plateau;
 - (h) Northumbria Coal Measures;
 - (i) Protecting and enhancing the quality of the wide views of the North York Moors, upland Dales and the villages across the Tees Valley;
- (iii) Protecting, enhancing and promoting the quality and integrity of Darlington’s distinctive designated national built heritage and archaeology as well as:
 - (j) Buildings, their settings and features of historic and archaeological local importance in Conservation Areas;
 - (k) Buildings, features and landmarks on the local list;
 - (l) Buildings and features that reflect Darlington’s railway, industrial and Quaker heritage;
 - (m) Buildings on the local ‘at risk’ register.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Planning Obligations SPD Open Space Strategy Darlington Characterisation Study	Development Control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Development briefs/masterplans Conservation Area Character Appraisals Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Darlington Tree Strategy Local List Local at risk register Scheduled ancient monument audit
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	Bidding for English Heritage funding to secure improvements to the management of Conservation Areas
Monitoring Indicators	
NI005 New	Overall satisfaction with local area Number of new Conservation Area Character appraisals completed annually

7.2 BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

Context

¹SSSIs are nationally important biodiversity sites designated by Natural England under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

²Local Nature Reserves are designated by the Council under national legislation. They are for wildlife and the enjoyment of wildlife.

³Local Wildlife Sites are identified and designated locally, and are of local interest.

⁴Ancient woodland has been continuously woodland since 1600 with a diverse range of species, including rare and unusual species.

⁵Durham Biodiversity Action Plan – periodically updated to reflect priorities and actions

⁶The urban heat island effect is where the heat generated and retained by buildings and hard surfaces makes temperatures in towns higher than the surrounding countryside.

7.2.1 The Borough has an extensive, but fragmented, network of biodiversity and geological sites. There are four nationally protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest¹, eight Local Nature Reserves², 50 Local Wildlife Sites³. In addition, areas of ancient woodland⁴, like those along the River Tees, support a diversity of wildlife habitats including many rare and declining species of flora and fauna. Elsewhere, Darlington's healthy trees and other woodland brings ecological value to public and private spaces, and helps connect wildlife habitats and green spaces for the benefit of wildlife and people.

7.2.2 Habitat restoration, creation and enhancement will help reverse habitat fragmentation and return key biodiversity resources to viable levels. A range of priority habitats are identified in the UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plan⁵, like the Dingy skipper butterfly and black poplar trees. Safeguarding existing trees and promoting new planting will also provide shade, cooling urban spaces and helping to counteract the 'urban heat island'⁶ effect and reducing the impact of climate change.

7.2.3 Improved access between and within wildlife sites and other spaces with wildlife value has educational, health, recreation and quality of life benefits for the community, and will help to ensure biodiversity is promoted positively in the future. Wetlands and floodplains can also play an important role in water storage and flood management, helping to mitigate the impact of climate change.

7.2.4 The urban fringe provides future opportunities to improve local biodiversity, through enhancing habitat connectivity and species movement, food production, alongside recreation, heritage and renewable energy generation schemes.

The Issues

How to promote biodiversity?

7.2.5 The amount and diversity of habitats and species in the Borough will be improved through conservation, restoration and enhancement of existing habitats. Complementing this, new wildlife sites will be created to improve connectivity between existing sites.

7.2.6 Reinforcing corridors of wetlands, wet woodland, rivers and ponds across the Borough will enhance biodiversity and support species like otters and water voles. New wetland areas, like at Rockcliffe Hall and as part of sustainable drainage systems, like at West Park, can provide new habitats for many other priority species, such as Great Crested Newts. Elsewhere, additional priority habitats can be achieved through good design, with features such as green roofs, living walls, bat and bird boxes as part of new buildings and planting schemes, and natural and semi natural greenspace and sustainable drainage systems as part of overall developments.

How should Darlington's tree cover be enhanced?

7.2.7 Planting a range of native trees in the community woodland around the urban fringe near South Burdon will continue. Also, priority species like native woodland and street trees will be sought in new development, to

complement existing provision, helping to address any loss of trees, and enhance tree cover in areas where it is currently limited.

How should Darlington's urban fringe be managed for biodiversity?

7.2.8 Parts of Darlington's largely agricultural urban fringe now have limited biodiversity value and distinctiveness, as natural and semi-natural habitats, such as hedgerows, have been lost or fragmented. The urban fringe is important to biodiversity as suitable habitats there can allow species to move to and from town to country.

7.2.9 Promoting biodiversity at the urban fringe will be achieved by ongoing community woodland planting and promoting Skerningham as a countryside site, and through good design, as outlined in 7.2.6 above.

The Options Considered

7.2.10 The options considered for protecting and enhancing Darlington's biodiversity and geodiversity network were⁷:

- (a) maintaining the current level of provision and encourage biodiversity in new development;
- (b) maintaining the current level of provision and provide additional protection in areas at risk;
- (c) protecting a network of sites and corridors with improved management;
- (d) providing additional protection on all sites;
- (e) promoting local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, the Tees Forest and key identified sites;
- (f) combining of (a)-(e);
- (g) promoting more access to the urban fringe;
- (h) promoting multifunctional spaces in the urban fringe;
- (i) encouraging high quality small scale development in the urban fringe;
- (j) combining of (g)-(i);
- (k) protecting existing tree cover;
- (l) protecting existing tree cover and provide new trees at key sites, urban fringe and gateways sites; and
- (m) maintaining and protecting healthy trees, promote replacement planting and new planting at the community forest and areas with low cover

⁷See Option 4, 19, 20, 21, 22 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

7.2.11 Sustainability appraisal found options (f) (j) and (m) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the negative effect that poorly designed tree planting could have on community safety, and that increased access to the urban fringe may bring increased management and maintenance pressures.

7.2.12 Comments made during the development of draft policies highlighted the importance of access to the network and the positive impact biodiversity can have in reducing the impact of flood risk and climate change.

7.2.13 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option are a combination of Options (f), (j) and (m) and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS15.

Revised Draft Policy CS15: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The protection, enhancement and extension of the Borough's biodiversity and geological network will help achieve a sufficient level of habitats at a range of sites to maintain the sustainability of the target priority habitats and species, to contribute to the delivery of the UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plans by:

1. conserving, restoring and enhancing the condition of sites identified as having high biodiversity and geodiversity value including:
 - A. Strategic wildlife corridors like along the River Tees and River Skerne
 - B. Local Nature Reserves
 - C. Local Wildlife Sites
2. protecting and extending the priority habitats and geological network through the design of new development;
3. ensuring that new development would not result in any net loss of existing biodiversity value;
4. where appropriate, restrict access and usage in order to conserve an area's existing biodiversity value whilst enhancing biodiversity along access corridors and to sites with high biodiversity and geodiversity value;
5. protecting and enhancing healthy ancient woodland, mature trees, street trees and community forestry; and
6. protecting and improving watercourses and wetland, where appropriate incorporating integrated surface water management and flood water storage.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Open Space Strategy	Development Control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Development briefs/masterplans Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Darlington Tree Strategy Ecological masterplans and management plans UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plans
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or improve priority habitats
DBC	Capital Programme
DBC/developers/ Housebuilders	Allocation of land through new development
DBC	£152,000 Big Lottery Fund 'Reaching Communities Programme' to improve access and management at Maidendale Nature Reserve
DBC	£45,200 development grant to develop a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' Programme to secure improvements to Brinkburn Denes
DBC	Bidding for up to £878, 727 by December 2009 to secure funding to refurbish The Denes through the 'Parks for People' programme
DBC/Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership/Durham Biodiversity Partnership/Durham Wildlife Trust	Bidding for Environment Agency funding for improvement of watercourses, Landfill Tax contributions and other grants to secure improvements to biodiversity sites.
Monitoring Indicators	
NI197	Proportion of Local Wildlife Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented
E2	Total area of land managed as DBAP priority habitats (ha)
New	Total number of Local Wildlife sites
New	Total number of breeding ponds for Great Crested Newts

7.3 PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY

Context

7.3.1 The Borough's natural environment is a valuable, but fragile resource. If managed properly and respected, it can be harnessed to moderate the rising temperatures caused by climate change, reduce the risk of flooding to land and property, support a variety of life, and help to sustain a quality, healthy environment for people to live and work in.

¹PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control, ODPM 2004

7.3.2 A key priority¹ is to protect the natural environment from a range of pollution sources - air, land, water, light and noise – for the benefit of the environment, local amenity and people's health. The Borough's industrial heritage has left a legacy of contaminated land, derelict sites, and unstable ground. Air and noise pollution is at a low level but rising, particularly along the busiest road transport routes, and water pollution is monitored regularly to ensure the Borough's groundwater aquifer remain clean and safe to use.

The Issues

How to manage flood risk sustainably?

7.3.3 A 'proactive approach' to reducing flood risk from all sources will be implemented, particularly from the network of watercourses that run through the Borough, as well as from surface water, groundwater, mine water and sewer flooding.

²PPS25: Development and Flood Risk, DCLG, 2006

7.3.4 Prioritising the allocation of land for development in ascending order from areas of lowest fluvial flood risk to areas of highest fluvial flood risk (Flood Zones 1, 2, 3a and 3b) will help ensure development is not located in the areas of highest flood risk. This approach reflects national guidance² and the Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment³.

³Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, JBA Consulting, 2009

7.3.5 Some types of development, like housing, are more vulnerable to flooding and to the potential loss of life and damage than others, and will generally be located outside high flood risk areas (Flood Zones 3a and 3b), unless there are exceptional circumstances. Only where a more vulnerable development is on previously developed land and is essential to meet the Borough's regeneration aspirations, like in the Town Centre Fringe, will it be considered in higher risk flood zones (Zone 2 and 3a). To ensure that development remains safe and does not increase flood risk elsewhere, particularly downstream, a detailed Flood Risk Assessment will be required for each development.

7.3.6 In Flood Zones 3a, 2 and 1, flood risk does not necessarily preclude development; following an assessment of vulnerability and a Flood Risk Assessment, design and layout modifications, such as the inclusion of open space, can potentially ensure that more vulnerable developments can be accommodated in higher flood risk zones with little risk to people and property. Alternatively the developable area may need to be reduced.

⁴Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) imitate natural drainage by reducing and slowing the quantity and rate of surface water run off from a development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible

7.3.7 Surface water management, like sustainable drainage systems⁴ should be an integral part of the design of new development, ensuring that surface water runoff and flooding from sewers is managed effectively; reducing the level of run off into the nearest watercourse will ensure there is no increase in flood risk downstream.

7.3.9 Reflecting low lying areas where surface water will flow after heavy rainfall, some parts of the Borough, like the Town Centre Fringe, have high susceptibility to surface water flooding in an extreme rainfall event. Integrated drainage solutions must be incorporated in the design of schemes in these areas.

How will pollution be managed?

7.3.10 Traffic is the main source of air pollution in the Borough; carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds and small particles are all emitted from vehicle exhausts. Continuous monitoring shows that even in the most congested parts of Darlington air quality levels are consistent with government objectives⁵. The locational strategy of this Core Strategy, together with complementary sustainable transport initiatives set out in the Council's Local Transport Plan⁶ are the primary means of ensuring that air quality is sustained at acceptable levels.

⁵Review and Assessment of Air Quality – Updating and Screening Report, DBC, 2006

⁶Darlington Local Transport Plan, 2008-2011.

⁷Darlington Contaminated Land Strategy, DBC

7.3.11 There are 1280 potentially contaminated sites within the Borough. Ongoing remediation through the planning system and Part 2A Contaminated Land regime will reduce this risk. New development on contaminated land and unstable land should mitigate the risk effectively, having regard to the regeneration priorities for previously developed land, and the sensitivity of the proposed end use.

⁸Groundwater source protection zones are wells, boreholes and springs that are used to supply the public's drinking water.

7.3.12 Groundwater and river quality is especially vulnerable to pollution, as once polluted, it remains contaminated for a long time. New development along river corridors or within the Borough's groundwater source protection zones⁸ must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to minimise the risk of pollution and maintain or improve water quality.

7.3.13 Several installations and pipelines handling notifiable substances are located within the Borough. Where appropriate, advice of the relevant regulatory organisations, like the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and Civil Aviation Authority, will be sought for proposals falling within their defined consultation zones.

The Options Considered

7.3.14 The options for promoting a safer, cleaner environment considered were:

- (a) following the sequential approach to development, ensuring appropriate surface water management and flood mitigation is incorporated in the design where appropriate;
- (b) developing strict guidelines over the location of potentially air polluting new development;
- (c) providing locational guidelines for developments that could cause vibration, noise and dust; and
- (d) developing appropriate controls for the development of contaminated, unused or underused brownfield sites.

⁹See Option 25, 27, 28, 29 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

7.3.15 Sustainability appraisal found all the options to be sustainable, but it highlighted that some environmental controls are outside the scope of town planning, and that good design and the location of development will be key to minimising the impact and levels of vibration, noise and dust, maintaining a healthy environment and local amenity.

7.3.16 The Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009 contains all relevant flood risk information from fluvial, surface water, sewers, groundwater and artificial sources in Darlington, enabling the identification and selection of development locations away from vulnerable flood risk areas.

7.3.17 Comments made during the development of draft policies asked for the policy to reflect national planning guidance and emphasise the importance of surface water management in reducing flood risk.

7.3.18 As the options originally considered were complementary, the Council's revised preferred option is a combination of all the options, with additional material to reflect the other matters outlined above. It is expressed in revised draft policy CS16.

Revised Draft Policy CS16: Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

New development in Darlington should protect and, where possible, improve environmental resources, whilst ensuring there is no detrimental impact on the environment, general amenity and the health and safety of the community.

Development which may have an adverse impact on environmental resources should be avoided. Exceptionally, it may be permitted where it is to promote regeneration or provide essential infrastructure, and in these cases, it should comply with national planning guidance and statutory environmental quality standards for:

- (a) areas at risk from river flooding like along the main rivers of the River Tees and River Skerne, as well as along the ordinary watercourses of Neasham Stell, Baydale Beck, Cocker Beck and West Beck; and
- (b) areas at risk from surface water run off, groundwater, mine water and sewer flooding; and
- (c) air, land, light or noise pollution; and
- (d) contaminated land and unstable land; and
- (e) water quality of the River Tees and River Skerne and other water courses and the Magnesian Limestone Aquifer.

Development proposals must include an assessment appropriate to the type and extent of impact and any associated risks to the satisfaction of the relevant environmental body. Proposals will only be permitted where the land is, or can be mitigated appropriately to be suitable for the proposed use.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD SPD Open Space Strategy Darlington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009	Development Control decisions Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Development briefs/masterplans Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Contaminated Land Strategy
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC DBC DBC/developers/ Housebuilders	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure flood risk mitigation or remediation of contaminated land Capital Programme Allocation of land through and for new development

DBC	Remediation of land through planning applications
Monitoring Indicators	
NI186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area
NI188	Adapting to climate change
NI189	Flood and coastal erosion risk management
NI194	Level of air quality through LA estate
Core E1	No of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice

8. A HEALTHY AND SAFE DARLINGTON

8.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Context

¹Darlington Open Space Strategy
2007-2017, DBC

8.1.1 One of Darlington's key assets is the wide range of attractive, green spaces that are found within or on the edge of the urban area and in the main villages. Covering about 900ha¹, this extensive green infrastructure network comprises a series of multi-functional green spaces linked by green corridors, or within and between the town and villages. It includes formal parks, woodlands, river corridors, local wildlife sites, open spaces, children's play areas, allotments, the urban fringe and the countryside. Together, these provide a high quality, distinctive environment in which to live and work in, or to visit.

8.1.2 Some parts of the Borough, like some inner areas and parts of the urban fringe, have relatively poor access to green infrastructure. Quality varies greatly and the type of provision does not always match community needs. In rural areas, like Middleton St George, Hurworth and Heighington there is good access to a range of open spaces but the quantity, type and accessibility varies.

8.1.3 Access to high quality green spaces brings many benefits, several health related. Healthier lifestyles are encouraged and made possible because of:

- (a) better opportunities for exercise, sport and active recreation, and enhanced well-being arising from the tranquillity and absence of noise, air and light pollution in many open spaces
- (b) the safe and sustainable transport routes that run through many open spaces provide attractive opportunities for people to move around the Borough on foot or by bike;
- (c) the opportunities to grow local food on the 26 allotment sites in the Borough. These provide about 900 tenants with opportunities to grow fresh, healthy food, contributing to a better diet and
- (d) promoting health and fitness that comes from the gardening.

8.1.4 Green spaces also help moderate the rising temperatures caused by climate change, and reduce the risk of land and property flooding, where they store flood water and reduce the rate of surface water runoff. Some green spaces allow better access to the Borough's heritage and biodiversity assets, whilst home grown food produced on allotments can mitigate the environmental impact of importing food, as well as providing habitats for wildlife and opportunities for education and healthy exercise.

The Issues

How to provide a comprehensive, multifunctional network?

8.1.5 The basis of the network will be several strategic green corridors, like along the River Tees and along Nunnery Lane. These will provide linear connections between Darlington's array of local parks, woodlands and smaller green spaces, ultimately connecting the urban area with the urban fringe and the countryside. Several green wedges¹ and strategic gaps² complement these corridors, protecting areas of open land between some of the Borough's neighbourhoods and villages, helping to retain their different identities (see figure 8.1).

8.1.6 Existing green spaces will be protected and improved, where appropriate. Opportunities to create new spaces as part of new development, like at Lingfield Point, will reinforce the extent of the network across the Borough, improving its accessibility to all.

8.1.7 One of the attractions of the Borough's green infrastructure network is the different multifunctional spaces that are found within it. The network provides formal and informal spaces for a variety of sport and recreation activities, ranging from children's play and formal sports pitches to areas for dog walking and jogging. The retention and extension of opportunities for access to the network, where it assists regeneration and enhances biodiversity, accords with the sub-regional approach³.

How to promote allotments?

8.1.8 With about 20 plots per 1000 households, Darlington's allotment provision is consistent with national guidelines⁴. However, quality and access to allotments varies across the Borough; most are found in the more densely populated parts of the urban area, though nine wards currently lack any provision (see fig 8.1). Sites vary in size from 3 to 150 plots, but all providers have experienced a recent surge in demand, with an estimated 400 people currently on the Council's and self managed sites waiting lists. This indicates an unmet need for additional allotments, together with a need to make the most of existing allotment space.

Figure 8.1: Existing Distribution of Open Space
To insert

The Options Considered

8.1.9 The options considered for protecting and enhancing Darlington's green infrastructure network were⁵:

- (a) permitting the loss of open space, subject to a needs assessment;
- (b) permitting the loss of open space if development is ancillary to, and improves the quality of, open space, subject to a needs assessment;
- (c) allowing development of open spaces for regeneration with equivalent provision made elsewhere;
- (d) protecting and improving existing children's play areas;
- (e) identifying high quality strategic sites and quality local sites for children's play;
- (f) requiring all new spaces to use secured by design principles;
- (g) making improvements to spaces using planning obligations;

¹Green wedges are locally defined areas of greenspace that separate discrete parts of the main urban area.

²Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East Policy 10 identifies several strategic gaps between built up areas

³Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy 2008.

⁴National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners

⁵See Option 25, 27, 28, 29 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

- (h) using public investment, external funding and planning obligations to make improvements to spaces and children's play areas;
- (i) identifying priority areas for investment;
- (j) combining (f) to (l);
- (k) promoting the same approach to open space provision in the villages and the urban area;
- (l) developing separate standards for villages with the local community

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

8.1.10 Sustainability appraisal found options (c) (e) (j) and (l) to be the most sustainable. It highlighted the adverse environmental impacts that the loss of open spaces could have on climate change, biodiversity and flood risk, but noted that investment, such as additional planting and sustainable drainage within open spaces could offset such impacts.

8.1.11 Those responding to consultations asked for the importance of informal and formal spaces in the green infrastructure network to meet the needs of the community to be recognised, and that the requirements of PPG17 should be accurately reflected in the policy.

8.1.12 Taking into account the matters outlined above, the Council's revised preferred option is a combination of Options (c), (e) (j) and (l) and this is expressed in revised draft policy CS17.

Revised Policy CS17: Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network

The green infrastructure network will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a quality, accessible, safe network of well connected, multifunctional green spaces to meet the formal and informal recreation needs of the community, help reduce health inequalities and enhance the visual amenity, biodiversity and historic character of the Borough. This network will include:

- A) Strategic corridors that have been identified in the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy:
 - a) River Tees
 - b) River Skerne
 - c) River Skerne Corridor to West Park
 - d) Darlington, Middleton St George, A66/A67 Corridor to Stockton
- B) Strategic gaps
 - a) between Darlington and the surrounding towns, villages and Newton Aycliffe and
 - b) between Darlington and Middleton St George
- C) Green wedges at Cocker Beck, Blackwell/Skerne Park and Haughton/Red Hall
- D) Locally Important Open Spaces that have been identified in the Open Space Strategy;
- D) Community forestry at South Burdon, Skertingham and Merrybent
- E) Strategic Countryside site at Skertingham/Barmpton Lane
- H) Allotments;
- I) Urban fringe; and
- K) The Rights of Way network.

The loss of any part of the green infrastructure network will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that the site no longer has any value to the community in terms of access and usage, is not required to meet a shortfall in the provision of that open space type or another open space type, and an alternative equivalent or better space in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility, biodiversity, flood storage, attractiveness and functionality is available.

Locally Important Open Spaces: parks, cemeteries, local nature reserves, green corridors, informal open space, landscape amenity, children's play areas, Darlington Railway Museum & undeveloped sections of the Stockton & Darlington Railway trackbed, Market Place and High Row, village greens

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Planning Obligations SPD Open Space Strategy	Development Control decisions Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Darlington Allotments Strategy Durham Biodiversity Action Plan Rights of Way Improvement Plan Play Strategy Local Transport Plan 2 & 3
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC Darlington Children's Trust LTP 2 LTP 3 DBC DBC DBC/developers/ housebuilders	£1.1 million government Playbuilder grant to deliver 22 natural play sites by 2011 £185,000 Area Based Grant for play in 11 most disadvantaged wards £100,000 for Green Lane improvements Bidding for funding for green sustainable transport projects linking the town and the countryside like creating a new link between Baydale Beck and Merrybent S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or improve existing open space, children's play and priority habitats Capital Programme Allocation of land through and for new development
Monitoring indicators	
NI197 E2 Local 13 Local 14 Local 23 New New New	Proportion of Local Wildlife Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented Total area of land managed as DBAP priority habitats (ha) Open space provision in the urban area – surveyed every three years. Amount of open space managed to Green Flag Award standard Allotment provision in the Borough Amount of open space provision ha per 1000 population in each ward Amount of open space achieving a quality rating of 3* and above Total number of Local Wildlife sites

8.2 PROMOTING QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Context

8.2.1 Darlington has a wide, varied range of indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities. Playing pitches, synthetic turf pitches and multi use games areas provide opportunities for football, rugby union, cricket and hockey, with other facilities providing locations for bowling, tennis, athletics, golf, swimming, court sports, health and fitness, gymnastics and boxing. However, the quality and accessibility of sports facilities varies greatly, and does not always meets the community's needs or future aspirations for adult and junior sport.

8.2.2 23% of Darlington's adults participate in sport and recreation activities at sports facilities for at least 30 minutes three or more times a week, but this varies significantly across the Borough¹. Participation rates are much higher from residents living in the west and south west parts of the urban area to those living in the east and south east. Continuing to provide a range of sporting opportunities through a network of high quality, accessible facilities will help increase participation in these areas and improve health and fitness

¹Darlington Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy, PMP, 2009

in the community, and help to reduce health and social inequalities for Darlington’s residents.

The Issues

How to provide sufficient, high quality, playing pitches to meet community needs?

²Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy, PMP, 2009

8.2.3 Darlington’s 104 playing pitches² provide training and match facilities for football, rugby union, cricket and hockey teams and clubs. Equivalent to 1 playing pitch for every 1150 adults, this is 16% below the national average. Pitches are provided by the council, schools, clubs and privately. 46% of all pitches (48 pitches) are on school sites, but only 9 of these have secured community access out of school hours.

8.2.4 The quality of pitches across the borough varies, with those within parks tending to be lower quality, and high quality pitches often being overused, reducing their overall quality in the long term.

8.2.5 There are enough pitches in the Borough to meet the demand for rugby union, cricket and hockey, but not enough for junior football at peak times, for which a current shortfall of 18.5 pitches has been identified, which is only likely to increase by 2021, due to population growth and forecast participation increases.

8.2.6 Synthetic turf pitches, multi use games areas and five-a-side football facilities are also a valuable resource for pitch sports, providing consistent playing and practice conditions year round, and able to withstand more intensive use than grass pitches. Darlington has two synthetic turf pitches, at Eastbourne Sports Complex and Hummersknott School but there is sufficient demand for an additional facility²; increasing the availability of these facilities would help reduce the pressure on existing pitches, providing for more formal participation as well as casual use.

8.2.7 Reducing the deficit of junior pitches and improving pitch quality will be achieved through a hierarchy of provision; strategic ‘hub’ sites will provide more high quality adult and junior pitches, suitable for high level competition on a few managed sites. Complementary, smaller ‘satellite’ sites will provide pitches for lower level competition, casual play and training pitches to serve local communities, whilst single pitch sites will be for general recreational use. The characteristics of each type of site is set out in Table 8.2.1 below

8.2.8 Improving quality, securing more community access to pitches (particularly at education facilities) and improving management arrangements at hub and satellite pitches will allow more junior matches to be played each week, reducing the deficit and demand for additional junior pitches now and in the future.

Table 8.2.1: Hierarchy of Playing Pitch Provision²

Tier	Standards of Provision
Tier 1: Strategic hub sites e.g. Eastbourne Sports Complex	At least 4 good quality multi sports pitches Adequate changing facilities Secure community access Adult, junior and mini pitches High quality, well maintained provision Accessible by public transport with sufficient car parking Appropriate specification for high level competition
Tier 2: Satellite sites	At least 2 good quality pitches Adequate changing facilities

e.g. Haughton Education Village	Secure community access Quality, maintained site Accessible by public transport with car parking Within walking and cycling distance of residential areas Provide for lower level competition
Tier 3: Single pitch sites e.g. Springfield Park	Casual play and training with general recreational use No changing facilities required Average quality Car parking nearby
Supporting Facilities	Synthetic turf pitches, multi use games areas and 5 a side facilities

How to promote a network of indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities?

8.2.9 Complementing Darlington’s hierarchy of pitch provision is a network of indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities, providing for adult and junior participation in a wide range of active pursuits. The Borough has sufficient facilities to meet demand for swimming pools and sports halls, but quality varies¹; newer facilities, like Haughton Education Village, are operating at capacity while older facilities, like Longfield School swimming pool, have lower levels of use. Access to facilities varies, with most education facilities having little secure community access out of hours, the exceptions being Haughton Education Village, Hummersknott School and St Aidan’s Academy.

8.2.10 Darlington has 35 outdoor tennis courts. These are unevenly distributed across the town, are busy at peak times and only six public courts have secure community access. An indoor tennis facility could help complement this provision, and there is an identified need for another facility in the Tees Valley³ to meet demand, which could potentially be in Darlington.

³Regional Facilities Strategy, PMP, 2009

Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy, PMP, 2009

8.2.11 To help increase participation in sports and recreation activities, it is proposed to maintain and where appropriate improve the quality of and access to existing facilities, particularly at education sites, through a ‘hub and spoke’ model of provision, outlined in Table 8.2.2 below:

Table 8.2.2: Proposed provision sport and recreation facilities

Level	Standards of Provision
‘Hubs’	Outdoor sports: Eastbourne Sports Complex, including athletics track, climbing boulder, bowling Indoor sports: Dolphin Centre including 8 court sports hall, squash courts, swimming and diving pools, climbing wall Quality changing facilities Secure community access Adult and junior facilities Well managed provision Accessible by public transport with sufficient car parking
‘Spokes’ for indoor and outdoor facilities: Schools, colleges, Teesside University, Parish Council and Village halls	E.g. Haughton Education Village; 4 court hall, swimming pool Secure community access Quality changing facilities Adult and junior facilities Managed sites Accessible by public transport with car parking Within walking and cycling distance of residential areas
‘Spokes’ for indoor and outdoor facilities: Private clubs and facilities	E.g. Bannatynes Health Club; 113 stations, swimming pool, dance studio Membership only Quality changing facilities Adult and junior facilities

⁴See Option 26 of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, January 2008.

The Options Considered

8.2.12 Protecting and enhancing Darlington's sporting provision were considered through the Core Strategy: Issues and Options⁴, as well as by new options considered in preparing the Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy¹:

- (a) Identifying high quality strategic sites and lower quality local sites;
- (b) Requiring new or extended private playing pitches to have a community access agreement;
- (c) Combination of (a)-(b);
- (d) Maintaining, enhancing and improving access to the current level of sport and recreation provision;
- (e) Maintaining, enhancing and improving access to the current level of provision and seeking to address deficiencies through new development;
- (f) Through the hub and spoke model maintaining, enhancing and improving access to sports facilities

Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

8.2.13 Sustainability appraisal found options (c) and (f) to be the most sustainable, but highlighted the need to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure that the soil and land quality of single playing pitches is not reduced at the expense of improving strategic and satellite sites.

8.2.14 Comments made during the development of draft policies asked for a separate policy for sport and recreation facilities, and to recognise the role of these facilities in addressing health inequalities.

8.2.15 Taking into account the matters outlined above and the issues raised in the new strategies, the Council's preferred option is a new policy that combines Options (c) and (f), and this is expressed in draft policy CS18.

Draft Policy CS18: Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities

Darlington's sport and recreation facilities will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a range of quality, accessible and safe facilities to meet the needs of the community, and help reduce health inequalities.

Provision of playing pitches, synthetic turf pitches and multi-use games areas of appropriate quantity and quality will be according to the following hierarchy of provision:

A: Strategic hub sites:

- a) Eastbourne Sports Complex
- b) Blackwell Meadows
- c) North of Darlington Arena

B: Satellite sites:

- a) schools and colleges
- b) parks
- c) sports clubs
- d) Parish Council and privately owned sites

C: Single pitch sites in parks

Five-a-side facilities will be encouraged as a complementary part of this provision.

Provision of quality indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities will be according to the following network of provision:

A: Strategic hub sites:

- a) Eastbourne Sports Complex
- b) Dolphin Centre
- c) Longfield School

B: Publicly accessible sites:

- a) Other schools and colleges;
- b) Parish Council sites and village halls;

C: Privately owned sites

The loss of sport and recreation facilities will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, where either:

1. a needs assessment shows that there is an excess in the Borough; or
2. the proposal is ancillary to the use of the site as a sports and recreation facility and does not affect its quantity or quality; or
3. the sports and recreation facility is incapable of forming any other type of sports facility; or
4. the sports and recreation facility would be replaced by a facility of an equivalent or better quality and quantity in a suitable location, with equivalent or better management arrangements, before development starts; or
5. in the case of playing pitches, the proposal is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility which would benefit sporting needs in Darlington to outweigh the loss of the playing pitch.

Secured community use will be required to all new facilities.

Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Design of New Development SPD Planning Obligations SPD Open Space Strategy	Development Control decisions Regional Facilities Strategy Tees Valley Facilities Strategy Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy Darlington Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Play Strategy
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC DBC LEA DBC/developers/ Housebuilders Darlington College DBC/LEA/school governing body DBC/LEA Parish Council/club Parish Council/club/ community groups Private sector DBC/LEA	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure new or improve existing playing pitches and sports and recreation facilities Capital Programme Primary Capital Programme Allocation of land through and for new development Provision of two playing pitches and associated facilities at Blackwell Meadows £3.5million Government 14-19 diploma funding to enhance sports provision at Longfield School to be committed by April 2010 Bidding for potential £38 million BSF funding to rebuild or significantly renew 3 secondary schools with associated sports and recreation provision Bidding for Football Foundation/Heritage Lottery/ voluntary/public sector funding Provision of five a side facilities Secure community access agreements with education facilities

Monitoring Indicators	
NI008	Adult participation in sport
NI057	Children and young people's participation in high quality PE/sport
Local 23	No of accessible playing pitches

9. EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

PLANNING FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRAVEL CHOICE AND IMPROVING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1 Context

9.1.1 All transport users in the Borough, from businesses and private motorists to cyclists and pedestrians, require safe and efficient infrastructure to meet their needs, whether it be strategic road or rail networks or small-scale information, parking or passenger waiting facilities.

9.1.2 Darlington has a key role to play as a gateway to the North East region and the Tees Valley because of its excellent transport links. These include both the A1 and A66 strategic roads, Durham Tees Valley Airport, and the East Coast Main Line - providing fast rail access to London and Scotland and carrying cross-country and trans-Pennine services. Locally, rail services on the Middlesbrough/Saltburn and Bishop Auckland branch lines from the town serve destinations within the Tees Valley and County Durham. These connections to areas outside its boundaries have helped to make Darlington an attractive place to live and do business.

9.1.3 Within the Borough, there is currently relatively low car ownership¹, high but declining bus usage², increasing levels of walking and cycling³ and rising rail patronage⁴. The network of roads and bus, cycle and walking routes provide excellent accessibility within the Borough across all travel modes, reflected in and in part arising from Darlington's current and recent status as a Cycling Demonstration Town⁵ and Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town⁵ respectively.

9.1.4 Good access to jobs, shops, schools, health services, leisure facilities and other services is key to Darlington's prosperity and every resident's quality of life. Enhancing accessibility by a range of travel modes also brings other benefits, such as promoting social inclusion and strengthening local communities, reducing congestion and the need for costly highway works, reducing pollution as well as contributing to a healthy lifestyle from walking and cycling.

9.1.5 The policy framework for tackling transport issues is set out in national, regional and local policy documents. The national policy framework⁶ for developing transport policy has recently been revised. The key goals now focus on actions that will take significant steps towards mitigating climate change, such as further developing sustainable transport systems, facilitating travel behaviour change and reducing the need to travel, whilst not forgetting the role that transport planning choices can have in creating a fairer, safer and healthier society, and in supporting economic competitiveness and growth.

¹The 2008 travel survey found 26% of households do not own a car.

²Around 8.85 million bus passenger journeys started or finished in the Borough during 2008/9, a decline of 1.8 million journeys since 2001/2.

³Walking trips increased from 25% to 29% and cycling from 1% to 3% of all trips between 2004 and 2008.

⁴Rail passenger journeys to/from Darlington Stations have increased by 21% since 2004/5 to 2.2. million per year.

⁵Cycling and Local Motion (Sustainable Travel) Demonstration Town status bring extra Government funding for investment in innovative cycling and sustainable travel projects.

⁶Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) (DfT, Nov. 2008) and 'Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future' (DfT).

⁷RSS Policies 1, 7, 10 and 48-57

9.1.6 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out “improving connectivity and accessibility within and beyond the region” as one of its four key themes to help deliver a renaissance for the North East, and indicates that this should be achieved with a transport network that promotes sustainable patterns of activity, development and movement. This requires ‘rebalancing’ the existing transport network towards more sustainable forms of transport, and in so doing, making best use of existing resources and infrastructure, such as the road network, before justifying investment in additional capacity. The RSS⁷ also stresses the key role that transport infrastructure has to play in providing access for all to employment and promoting sustainable patterns of activity, development and movement. Strategic infrastructure can support regional economic growth and regeneration, whilst best use should be made of existing infrastructure before improvements and additions to existing provision are considered.

9.1.7 The national ‘DaSTS approach’⁶ also presents regions with new opportunities to develop programmes which best support the sustainable economic and social development of the region, whilst taking account of the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

9.1.8 At the local level, the current Transport Strategy⁸ seeks to:

⁸Darlington Transport Strategy 2006-2030, DBC 2006

- Improve accessibility to services and opportunities by providing travel options, so that all may participate in the life of their community;
- Tackle traffic congestion and its associated effects on local communities through a focus on sustainable travel choices, thus contributing to residents’ quality of life;
- Make the transport network safe and secure for all; and deliver solutions to travel needs in partnership with local people, businesses and other providers.

9.1.9 Work is underway to update the Transport Strategy and prepare a Local Transport Plan for the period 2011-2026. Development of the new strategy will focus on delivery of the core outcomes identified as most important to Darlington within the Sustainable Community Strategy ‘One Darlington: Perfectly Placed’, whilst also taking into account national transport policy guidance.

9.1.10 The relatively low levels of traffic congestion in and around Darlington and the good connectivity that the borough has with the rest of the sub-region and beyond are key to making the Borough an attractive place to live and do business. The challenge facing Darlington over the next 15 years or so is to continue to accommodate the aspired amount of growth and regeneration activity without adding to congestion and adversely impacting on local quality of life.

9.2 The Issues

How to improve and increase connections between the Borough and elsewhere

Roads

9.2.1 The quality of connections that the strategic road network provides could be reduced as traffic levels increase. This is acknowledged in the RSS, which states that the Darlington bypass, together with some of its junctions,

could deter or be a restraint on development in the future - in Darlington and areas to the east, including Durham Tees Valley Airport (DTVA) and Teesport - unless action is taken to improve its capacity.

⁹published in 2004 by the North East Assembly, Highways Agency and the Borough Council.

¹⁰Final report due November 2009.

¹¹Regional funding allocation for transport from DfT.

¹²RSS policv 10

¹³RSS Policies 10 and 51

¹⁴Improved signage, cycle parking and footways approaching the Station buildings.

¹⁵Better interchange with bus services and improved footbridge to Garbutt Square.

¹⁶RSS Policy 10, 10.4c and 10.4d, and Policy 50.

¹⁷Tees Valley Unlimited is a partnership of the five Tees Valley Authorities and other key stakeholders created in 2008 to improve the economic performance of the sub-region, see www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

9.2.2 The A66(T) Tees Valley Gateway Study (TVGS)⁹ considered several options to reduce congestion and improve safety on the single carriageway A66 bypass around Darlington. The preferred option included upgrading the section north of the A67 Yarm Road junction to dual carriageway, partly by providing a bypass of the Great Burdon roundabout. The Tees Valley authorities and the Highways Agency have developed an Area Action Plan¹⁰ for the A66/A19/A174, and a number of traffic models have been developed to test development scenarios and potential solutions to ensure that the strategic road network and secondary road network operate effectively, minimising vehicle delay. Schemes identified in the Plan will be fed into the RFA¹¹ process for funding. The RSS¹² also indicates that improvements to the A66 Darlington bypass should be considered as a priority to improve surface access to the Airport that supports its growth.

Public transport

9.2.3 The centre of Darlington is identified in the RSS¹³ as one of five Strategic Public Transport Hubs in the north east - places which exhibit the highest levels of public transport accessibility at the strategic level. The RSS prioritises the hubs, particularly those around railway stations, for the development of high quality interchange facilities and service integration between all modes of transport, and for works to increase the level of cycling and walking to them.

9.2.4 The town centre and Bank Top railway stations combined form the Darlington centre hub. Recently, a travel plan has been developed for the Station, identifying areas for improvement in and around the Station and setting out a programme of works for shorter term measures¹⁴ and aspirations for longer term access and environmental improvements¹⁵.

9.2.5 A detailed business case is currently being prepared for improving rail connections across the Tees Valley, including the provision of a new station platform immediately to the east of the existing Bank Top Station building.

9.2.6 Proposals for phase one of the rail improvements currently focus on the Darlington to Saltburn rail corridor, including a new rail stop at Durham Tees Valley Airport. Future upgrading of the rail service (phase 2) may involve a light rail link into Central Park and possibly the Town Centre.

9.2.7 Proposals for the rail improvements are supported in the RSS¹⁶ and in Tees Valley Unlimited's¹⁷ Business Plan for 2009-2012. It is also highlighted in 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' as necessary to underpin economic growth in the borough. Improved levels of service on the local rail network would greatly improve non-car links between the main urban areas of the Tees Valley.

9.2.8 Planned highway improvements on the junction at Whesloe Road/North Road adjacent to North Road Station could provide an opportunity for a car park and enhanced interchange with bus services. The Bishop Auckland to Darlington rail line may form part of a major scheme by Durham County Council to enhance stations, infrastructure and services along this route. This could include a new platform at North Road with new pedestrian access to the Head of Steam Museum.

¹⁸Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement, a joint bid for Government funding from the five Tees Valley local authorities.

9.2.9 The bus network is also considered essential to connectivity across the sub-region, and a major programme of bus priority improvements (TVBNI¹⁸), is to be implemented across the Tees Valley, to cut journey times and improve reliability for passengers.

Cycling

9.2.10 The Sustrans cycle network includes National Cycle Route 14 between Stockton and Darlington and regional network route 52, running along the southern edge of the Borough, from Croft-on-Tees to Low Dinsdale.

9.2.11 The Highways Agency have identified a number of schemes between Blackwell in Darlington and Hartburn in Stockton to enhance provision for cyclists, and these could be links or improved crossing facilities. The Council is also currently considering how to improve the cycle network to County Durham, in particular to Newton Aycliffe.

Air travel

9.2.12 Durham Tees Valley Airport is key to connecting the Borough with other parts of the UK, Europe and beyond, and an essential part of the infrastructure necessary to underpin improving economic performance of the Tees Valley. In recent years, the airport has handled up to about 100,000 passengers per month¹⁹.

¹⁹www.durhamteesvalley.com

9.2.13 Planning permissions are in place to support further growth in the quality and quantity of facilities for passengers and freight at the airport. These would enable the airport to handle up to three million passengers a year, as well as creating a new cargo and maintenance village. In addition, proposals for improving rail infrastructure at the airport are included in Phase 1 of the Tees Valley Metro proposals (see earlier para 9.2.6 above), and the RSS identifies that improvements to the A66 bypass around Darlington would improve surface access to the Airport (see para. 9.2.1 above).

How to reduce traffic congestion and maintain accessibility within the urban area ?

9.2.14 Tackling traffic congestion whilst enhancing accessibility to jobs, facilities and services for all residents and businesses across all parts of the Borough was identified as a key issue for the Borough in 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'. It is seen as integral to the Borough's economic development strategy, good land use planning and local quality of life for all.

9.2.15 In order to maintain good levels of accessibility and minimise levels of traffic congestion, particularly as new development takes place, it is essential that the Council and its partners continue to work to a transport strategy that:

- makes better use of the transport network, through improvements to traffic management, particular at pinch points on the network; and
- encourages people to use more sustainable travel modes in place of the private car; and
- reduces the need to travel by providing local services close to homes and to places of work.

9.2.16 Currently, traffic congestion occurs at peak hours at some junctions on the main routes in and out of and around Darlington. Darlington's strategy for tackling congestion is:

- to improve road capacity through better traffic management and local road junction improvements; combined with

20 & 21

NMD is a statutory duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004. It is to help ensure traffic on roads keeps moving.

CPE allows the Council, as traffic authority, to take over parking duties previously performed by the Police, and to target enforcement where indiscriminate parking causes a congestion problem.

²² into the impact of Local Motion (March 2009)

²³ Examples of work to promote travel choices are:

- a memorandum of understanding between the Council and Arriva North East, setting out measures to improve the service for bus passengers in the Borough.
- Working with schools and employers on travel plans to promote sustainable travel.

²⁴ Local Motion research, March 2009

²⁵ Darlington Connections Study November 2009, Urban Initiatives.

- measures to encourage increased use of transport modes other than the private car. This is being delivered through travel marketing and behaviour change programmes, combined with improved public transport, cycling and walking networks and, over the longer term, planning for the better provision of local services

9.2.17 Funding for junction improvements on North Road, the Inner Ring Road and West Auckland Road is being sought through the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement (TVBNI) bid, to improve journey time reliability for all road users at each junction.

9.2.18 Ongoing implementation of the Network Management Duty (NMD)²⁰ and preparation for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)²¹ strengthen the approach to tackling congestion.

9.2.19 Independent research²² found a substantial change in the travel behaviour of Darlington residents between 2004 and 2008, with significant reductions in car use (13% reduction in vehicle mileage by residents comparing 2004 to 2008) and large increases in levels of walking and cycling, (15% and 113% respectively). This contributed to an observed decrease in traffic levels on local urban roads of 6% in peak hours and 5% over 24 hours comparing annual average traffic volume data for 2005/6 and 2008/9. The research also found considerable potential to achieve more reductions in car use, by focusing information and marketing on trips where it is would already be very easy to make a switch from the car to walking, cycling or public transport.

9.2.20 In the longer term improved provision of sustainable travel options, greater local connectivity and a better street environment where people want to spend time will help to encourage more journeys by foot, cycle or public transport, and if designed appropriately, will improve accessibility for people with mobility impairments.

How to develop a sustainable transport network?

9.2.21 The Borough Council aims to encourage sustainable travel options by promoting travel choices through information, marketing and incentives as well as by investment in maintaining, improving and extending physical infrastructure²³. In 2008, 82% of car trips by residents living in the 20 urban wards, were within the urban area and that for 59% of these car trips sustainable travel options were already a practicable option²⁴.

How to accommodate the travel generated by new development ?

9.2.22 New transport infrastructure will be required to connect new areas of development to enable people to make sustainable travel choices and to ensure that their journeys can be made safely and efficiently.

9.2.23 The recently completed Darlington Connections Study²⁵ highlights the sustainable transport links and demand management measures that would be needed to ensure that growth and development in the proposed strategic locations (see policy CS1) take place in a sustainable manner. Physical interventions would be interlinked with travel information and marketing measures to encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.

9.2.24 Darlington's Transport Strategy⁸ emphasises the importance of delivering a package of measures as the most effective approach to achieving its transport objectives. Looking to the future, increased use of

²⁶Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process, CLG/DoT April 2009. See Table 1 of this document for the thresholds at which travel plans will be required for different types of development, www.dft.gov.uk

sustainable travel has an important role in achieving a more effective use of Darlington's transport network, in reducing traffic congestion, in encouraging more active travel as part of a healthier lifestyle, in reducing carbon emissions from transport and in helping move Darlington to a lower carbon economy less susceptible to the increases in energy costs likely to take place over the next decade.

9.2.25 Travel plans are also an essential tool in embedding sustainable travel choices and behaviours from the outset in new developments. Travel plans will be required as part of larger planning applications, in accordance with national good practice²⁶

9.3 The Options Considered

²⁷Darlington Second Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 ('2LTP'). Darlington's Transport Strategy for 2006- 2030 is reproduced as Annex 3 to 2LTP.

9.3.1 A range of options for transport policy were considered and consulted upon in the preparation of the Council's Transport Strategy and Second Local Transport Plan (LTP)²⁷. The options focused on tackling congestion and improving accessibility by encouraging travel behaviour change and managing the transport network. A wide range of data was analysed and considerable consultation with the general public and stakeholders was undertaken.

²⁸ Issue 3, Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, Jan 08.

9.3.2 The Council asked during consultation on the issues and options for the Core Strategy how accessibility for all could be provided²⁸, with the suggested options being: promoting new development in the most sustainable locations; promoting more mixed use development; requiring new developments to adopt travel plans; leaving the issue to the 'transport market'; or a combination.

²⁹Theme 7, Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, Jan 08

9.3.3 During the preparation of this document, the issue of whether land for the central section of the Cross Town Route should continue to be safeguarded or not was also consulted on²⁹. Consultations also prompted discussions in general terms about the need for efficient and effective transport infrastructure.

9.4 Preparing a Revised Draft Policy

9.4.1 Comments made during the development of draft policies highlighted the need to promote new development in the most sustainable locations, particularly near the town centre and public transport nodes. Several respondents also supported a requirement for new developments to adopt travel plans and promote walking, cycling and public transport or to combine the approaches. Very few wanted to leave the matter to the 'transport market'. Reference was also made by consultees to the need for a bus station in Darlington. The need for, and practicality of a providing an effective bus station will be addressed as part of the development of the next Local Transport Plan.

³⁰Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Second Local Transport Plan, carried out by BDP (summary reproduced as Annex 7 to the 2LTP).

9.4.2 Strategic environmental appraisal of the Local Transport Plan³⁰ confirmed that it is largely comprised of policies and actions that have a positive impact on the environment, whilst the environmental disbenefits of its less-sustainable actions may be mitigated through measures contained within the Plan. The suggested policy below accords with the direction and objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy, Transport Strategy and LTP and with the feedback from Core Strategy consultation on issues and options. The policy also reflects the recent DfT regional funding award, particularly the greater certainty around the priorities bus improvements and rail based metro schemes.

9.4.3 Earlier consultations on this emerging Core Strategy revealed both support and opposition for continuing the safeguarding of the remaining sections of the Darlington Cross Town Route. Further work undertaken by the Council²⁵ has concluded that there is no longer a clear strategic justification for any deliverable scheme on the land currently safeguarded, where sections of the route have not been implemented. The scheme is therefore not identified in the Core Strategy.

³¹A66(T) Tees Valley
Gateway Study NEA, 2004

9.4.4 The potential for a strategic northern bypass was also raised by one respondent. Research carried out in 2004 for the North East Assembly³¹ found that whilst a single carriageway road from Great Burdon to Beaumont Hill would relieve the pressure on the A1150 through northern Darlington, it would have a moderate adverse impact on the area through which it passed. It was not pursued further as part of a wider scheme package due to a high cost estimate for benefits gained and high environmental impacts. As such the scheme is considered unlikely to be deliverable within the plan period.

Revised Draft Policy CS19: Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network

The Council and its partners will work together to make best use of and improve existing transport infrastructure within and connecting to the Borough, having considered first solutions to transport problems that are based on better management and the promotion of sustainable forms of travel.

For the existing road network, this will be by:

- (a) mitigating against congestion at pinch points and continuing to actively manage roads that are under its control as local highway authority; and
- (b) working with the Highways Agency to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network is maintained;
- (c) providing new local access roads to open up the broad locations identified for development elsewhere in this Core Strategy.

Specific priorities are as follows:

- (i) carrying out improvements at problem points on the road network, such as the North Road /Whessoe Road junction;
- (ii) protecting and promoting the urban radial routes of North Road, Haughton Road, Woodland Road and Yarm Road as key public transport corridors, and Coniscliffe Road, Eastern Transport Corridor and Grange Road as secondary public transport corridors;
- (iii) in the medium to long term (2016-2026), upgrade the capacity of the A66(T) to the east and south of the main urban area, by junction improvements and part dualling;

For the rail based transport network this will be by:

- (d) in the short term (up to 2016), providing new stopping facilities for rail services to the east of bank Top Railway Station and at Durham Tees Valley Airport;
- (e) in the longer term (up to 2026), investigating extension of light rail services through Central Park to Darlington town centre, and an additional halt at Morton Palms employment area;
- (f) in the short term (up to 2016), to integrate rail with all other transport modes, particularly in the corridor between Bank Top Railway Station, the town centre and Central Park, and at North Road Rail Station.

Guidance on Transport Assessment, DfT, 2007.

- For cycling, walking and other public transport, this will be by:
- (g) improving accessibility for all to employment, education, health, recreation, leisure and shopping facilities, particularly fresh food shops;
 - (h) improving local connections across busy transport corridors which act as barriers to local access;
 - (j) facilitating the development and implementation of school, workplace, residential and rail station travel plans;
 - (k) improving public rights of way and links to long distance footpaths;
 - (l) improving cycle routes as part of the national, regional or local cycle network.
 - (m) reducing the negative impact of the barrier created by the A66 for Non Motorized Users in conjunction with the Highways Agency

Specific priorities will be:

- (iv) in the short-medium term (up to 2021) to improve local accessibility to schools, workplaces, shops and other destination points;
- (v) to improve connectivity across the inner ring road, between the town centre and the town centre fringe;
- (vi) in the short term (up to 2016), to improve pedestrian and cycle links between the town and the villages, including crossing the A66 and A1;
- (vii) in the short term (up to 2016), to improve routes from the town to south-west Durham, Tees Valley and North Yorkshire for all road users.

Throughout the plan period, high quality, secure and appropriate levels of parking throughout the Borough will be provided, and the transport infrastructure for disabled people improved. Works will also be undertaken to ensure that transport infrastructure remains effective as the climate changes.

9.5 Making it Happen and Monitoring Delivery

Implementation Framework: Plans, Strategies and Decisions (of the Council unless indicated)	
Making Places DPD Accommodating Growth DPD Planning Obligations SPD Design of New Development SPD	Local Transport Plan, 2006-2011. Darlington Transport Strategy 2006-2030. Design, Access and Sustainability Statements Development Control decisions. Decisions about content of next Local Transport Plan 2011.
Delivery Organisation	Funding/Mean of Delivery
DBC	Department of Transport funding through the Regional Funding Allocation for general transport improvements: up to about £13.271 million (integrated transport block) and £12.292 million (maintenance) between 2011/12 and 2018/19.
DBC DBC/Highways Agency	Bidding for Department of Transport funding through the Regional Funding Allocation for specific major schemes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees Valley Metro – if bid successful, phase 1 will be implemented by 2013. • Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement (bid decision expected Jan 2010) • A66/A19/A174 Area Action Plan
DBC DBC	£3 million of funding from Cycling England for 2005-2011. EU Boosting Advanced Public Transport Systems Programme funding of €755k for 2008-2011
DBC/Private Developers	S106 agreements attached to the grant of planning permission to secure travel plans, contributions towards public transport, cycling and walking schemes, and new highway infrastructure
Monitoring Indicators	
NI167	Congestion – average journey time during morning peak.
NI175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.
NI176	Working age people with access to employment by public transport, demand responsive transport, walking and cycling.
NI177	Local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the Borough.

NI178	Bus services running on time.
NI198	Children travelling to school- mode of transport usually used.
LI 0301	Percentage of trips by Darlington residents made by bicycle
LI0302	Percentage of trips by Darlington residents made by car
LI0303	Change in peak period traffic flows
LI0304	Number of school travel plans
LI0305	Cycle flows
LI0306	Area wide traffic flows
LI0307	Percentage of rights of way that are easy to use by the public.