
**DARLINGTON LOCAL PLAN: MAKING AND
GROWING PLACES PREFERRED OPTIONS**

**Responsible Cabinet Members - Councillor Chris McEwan,
Economy and Regeneration Portfolio
and Councillor Stephen Harker, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors - Richard Alty, Director of Place
and Paul Wildsmith, Director of Resources**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report is to seek agreement to a draft development plan document containing draft site allocations and development management policies, and for it to be the subject of public and other consultations from mid June 2013. To help ensure that the Council owned sites mentioned in the document can be brought forward for development at the appropriate time, agreement is also sought for the disposal of specific sites.

Summary

2. The Making and Growing Places Preferred Options document ('the Preferred Options document') and associated draft Policies Map have been prepared as the basis for public and other consultations on draft land allocations and development management policies. It is a key public engagement stage on the path towards adoption of the detailed planning policies that will guide the use and development of land in the Borough until 2026. Once adopted, its provisions will complement the already adopted Darlington Core Strategy, and it will replace the remaining saved policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan. An up to date local plan is essential so that the Council can stimulate appropriate development in locations that are best for the borough. A clear vision, with good sites for development, can provide businesses and developers with a framework in which they can invest with confidence.
3. The Preferred Options document presented with this report includes 35 draft policies, each with an explanation of the issues, options, consultation responses and other information that was taken into account in preparing them. Proposals for development in key locations like the Town Centre, Town Centre Fringe and Durham Tees Valley Airport are followed by policies arranged by themes, such as

'quality housing for all', 'prosperous Darlington' and 'efficient and effective transport'. These reflect the themes of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, whose aims and objectives this document develops spatially. Information is also provided on how each policy or proposal will be delivered, and how progress against achieving the policy objectives will be achieved. A draft Policies Map, detailed appendices and background topic papers will also be published alongside the main document, together with a draft sustainability appraisal report, equalities impact and disability equalities impact assessments and a habitat regulations assessment screening report.

4. Where Council owned sites have been identified for new development, the Council will have to demonstrate that they will genuinely be available for development at the time they are likely to be required. To this end, this report also seeks resolutions to dispose of a number of sites that will be needed in short-medium term.
5. Subject to the agreement of Cabinet to the recommendations in this report, briefing sessions for Councillors will be held week commencing 17th June and a Special Place Scrutiny Committee, to which all Members will be invited, will be held week commencing 8th July.
6. It is expected that the six week consultation on this Preferred Options document, timetabled to take place from 21st June to 2nd August inclusive, will generate significant interest, particularly amongst those living near sites proposed as allocations for new development.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) subject to non substantive editorial changes by the Director of Place, the Making and Growing Places Preferred Options document at **Appendix 1** and a draft Policies Map be agreed as the basis for public and other consultations;
 - (b) the Council owned sites listed in paragraph 87 be declared surplus to requirements and the Director of Resources be authorised to dispose of the sites at the appropriate time for new housing development;

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) to fulfil the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 as they apply to local plan making;
 - (b) to make progress in meeting the statutory requirement to have an up to date local plan in place for the Borough of Darlington;
 - (c) to help ensure that the Council owned sites being proposed as development allocations can be brought forward for development at the appropriate time;

(d) to help stimulate appropriate development in the Borough.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

Making and Growing Places Preferred Options, May 2013
 Making and Growing Places DPD Scoping Report, DBC, Oct. 2012
 National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, March 2012
 Localism Act 2011
 Darlington LDF Core Strategy, May 2011
 Making Places and Accommodating Growth DPD Issues and Options, DBC, Nov. 2010
 Eastern Town Centre Fringe Area Action Plan Scoping Report, DBC
 Statement of Community Involvement in Planning, DBC 2009
 Darlington Town Centre Fringe Masterplan, April 2013
 Darlington Business Sites and Premises Review, NLP/DTZ, May 2013

Valerie Adams : Extension 2477

S17 Crime and Disorder	None of the draft policies and proposals specifically address crime and disorder as this has already been done through an adopted Local Plan Policy (Core Strategy CS2) and its accompanying Design of New Development Supplementary Planning Document.
Health and Well Being	A draft policy on social infrastructure includes planning primary healthcare to meet future needs, and other policies, such as housing regeneration at Red Hall, will help protect and improve buildings and spaces to a standard and quality that encourages health and well being among local people.
Carbon Impact	The overall pattern of development, land uses and infrastructure proposed is intended to reduce or at least keep to a minimum any increase in carbon emissions in the Borough.
Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment and a Disability Equalities Impact Assessment have both been carried out, and informed these draft policies. There is a specific draft policy to allocate land to accommodate travelling groups.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	Yes – the decision is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the Borough.
Urgent Decision	No.

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Once finalised, the Making and Growing Places document will, together with the Darlington Core Strategy, provide the spatial expression of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	<p>Costs can be met within budgets. Making progress towards having a full up to date development plan in place may reduce the Council's exposure to instances of award of costs against the Council at planning appeals.</p> <p>Proposed housing allocations will help to support new housing delivery, which translates to a form of income to the authority through the New Homes Bonus and Council tax receipts from the eventual residents.</p>

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

9. This report outlines the content and key issues that are addressed in a draft Local Plan document (see **Appendix 1**), and seeks Cabinet's agreement to undertake public and other consultation on the document and associated material. It also recommends that resolutions be made to dispose of the Council owned land that is allocated for new housing, and needs to be made available to developers in the short-medium term.

10. The document that is the subject of this report is the Making and Growing Places Preferred Options (hereinafter referred to as the Preferred Options document). It sets out 35 draft policies and proposals, including site allocations for a variety of land uses, such as new housing and employment, for the period until 2026. Draft site allocations and the areas where particular draft policies would apply will also be identified on an accompanying Ordnance Survey based draft Policies Map. This will be available in an on-line interactive form via the Council's website, with a limited run of printed plans available, to keep costs to a minimum.

11. The Preferred Options document also outlines how each draft policy has been prepared, including the findings of a sustainability appraisal, how previous comments on the issues/sites have been taken into account, the options considered and why the option reflected in the draft policy has been chosen. An Equalities Impact Assessment has also informed the preparation of the Preferred Options document.

12. Preparation of the Preferred Options document follows consultation on a Making and Growing Places Scoping Report in October/November 2012, and several other related consultations in the last two years or so. After this consultation, the Council must prepare and publish a 'Publication Draft' version of the document, which will be the version that the Council intends to submit to Government for independent examination. Then a programme of public hearings takes place, led by a Planning Inspector who then prepares a report for the Council, which may include non-

binding recommendations for changes that should be made to the plan. The Council will then need to decide whether to accept the recommendations before finalising and adopting the Making and Growing Places document. Only then will it form part of the statutory development plan for the area, replacing the remaining saved policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan. The Council's Local Development Scheme (agreed by Council in September 2012) anticipates adoption to be December 2014.

13. Unless indicated otherwise, the draft policies and proposals in the document develop upon and conform with the Council's adopted Darlington Core Strategy, and are considered to be consistent with the Government's more recent National Planning Policy Framework. Once adopted, Making and Growing Places will complete an up to date development plan for the borough, alongside the Darlington Core Strategy and Tees Valley Minerals and Waste planning documents.
14. Consultation on this Preferred Options document will be used as the platform for ensuring that the Council fulfils its new 'duty to co-operate', introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The duty encompasses adjacent local planning authorities, key statutory agencies, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage, and limited others, such as the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership.
15. The remainder of this report outlines the key matters that have been taken into account in preparing specific policies. All the draft policies and their reasoned justifications are in **Appendix 1**. An on-line and interactive draft Policies Map, showing all the areas of land to which all policies and proposals relate, will be available for the consultation; paper copies of the map will be made available for public display.
16. The draft policies proposed acknowledge reduced levels of public funding and support for new development and regeneration, particularly in the short-medium term, outside of key commitments like the Town Centre, Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe. Information in the document on 'making it happen' therefore identifies a wider range of delivery options, and articulates the Council's commitment to pursuing innovative approaches to delivery, where projects are key to delivering the Local Plan vision.

Promoting Employment Opportunities

17. This Preferred Options document acknowledges the general economic situation, and its draft policies and proposals reflect the view that the local economy is unlikely to recover to levels experienced in the mid 2000s until towards the end of this decade at the earliest. The Darlington Economic Strategy responded to this scenario, setting out a plan for stimulating and growing economic activity in Darlington, and the employment land allocations proposed are to ensure that suitable and attractive land is available to deliver that plan. A recently completed Darlington Business Sites and Premises Review, together with up to date information about interest and potential development proposals on specific sites has also informed the identification of employment land allocations.

18. Sixteen sites amounting to 283.7ha of employment land (excluding land at the Airport – see para. 40 below) (see **Appendix 2a**) are identified in draft Policy MGP 11. The main employment locations will continue to be in the Faverdale area and Eastern Darlington (Lingfield Point, Yarm Road, Morton Park and Morton Palms, but the Town Centre Fringe and Central Park are new locations that are expected to add significantly to the range and type of offer, particularly for commercial office space and business start ups. Sufficient land is identified for new businesses who want to set up in or relocate to Darlington, and for the expansion of existing businesses.
19. As in the existing Borough of Darlington Local Plan, the proposed portfolio of sites includes sites within existing employment areas, new employment sites, and sites for office/business park development. The key employment locations of Faverdale Reserve and Heighington Lane South are also identified, to meet the needs of new or emerging growth sectors, innovative or large user requirements, or other uses not provided for elsewhere in the Borough. Draft Policy MGP 11 also indicates how any proposals for employment (planning use classes B1, B2 or B8) outside of the allocated areas will be handled, and that they will be assessed on their merits, subject to the land not being designated for another use.
20. The proposed portfolio of sites also takes into account the need to potentially relocate some businesses within the Borough as regeneration of the Town Centre Fringe progresses. Specific consideration was also given as to whether some employment land, for example, at the southern end of Faverdale Industrial Estate, could be better used if allocated for other land uses or a mix of uses. The conclusion was that whilst tracts of land in that location are not currently attractive to the market, their attributes (e.g. good access to the A1(M), large potential workforce nearby and fully serviced land) are likely to make them attractive to employment uses when economic conditions improve, and should be therefore safeguarded for employment uses that may come forward later in the plan period.
21. The Making and Growing Places Scoping Report suggested that a policy on affordable workspace would also be included in the Preferred Options document. Further investigation into this suggests that such a policy is not needed, because there is a good supply of affordable workspace within the Borough, so this has not been followed up further.

Darlington Town Centre

22. The Town Centre is the first priority for development and regeneration, and is the subject of a specific policy (draft Policy MGP2) and single issue policies identifying primary and secondary shopping frontages (MGP12), fringe shopping areas (MGP13), and car parking (MGP29). Key proposals include office and parking provision at Feethams, to complement the cinema scheme, and the reservation of land at Commercial Street for a non food retail led shopping development. It is also proposed to extend the Town Centre to include further parts of Duke Street and Bondgate, but to leave the primary and secondary shopping frontages unchanged. Within the frontages, it is proposed to reduce the thresholds for allowing appropriate non A1 (retail) uses, to allow more consideration to be given to enlivening frontages experiencing little shopping activity.

23. Many of the draft policy and proposals relating to the town centre are not new, having been the subject of planning applications and/or recent consultations. However, policies and proposals relating to the town centre always attract a high level of interest, from the public, landowners and business operators alike, so the Council should expect a significant response to the consultation.
24. The proposals in this draft document reflect and build on the recommendations on Town Centre Regeneration agreed by Cabinet in December 2012 (Minute C84, 2012), and in work being undertaken on an emerging Parking Strategy.

Town Centre Fringe

25. Like the Town Centre, much of the draft policy relating to the Town Centre Fringe (draft Policy MGP3) is not new, having been the subject of recent consultations through the masterplanning process (Minute C149, 2013 refers). However, the draft policy does provide more detail on the land use and development elements of the adopted masterplan; 650 new homes, including at least 10% affordable housing and about 26,000sqm of office, light industry, workshops and ancillary retailing space is proposed, and the potential for an extension to the town centre (if needed) is included. To reflect the adopted Town Centre Fringe masterplan, itself informed by consultant Globe's evaluations in 2011, proposals for the cultural quarter indicated in the Core Strategy are no longer being pursued, although focussing further cultural/arts activity in the area around the Civic Theatre is still being explored.
26. An indication of the amount and type of development that could be accommodated in six sub areas of the Town Centre Fringe is included in the document (see **Appendix 2b**).
27. Other key provisions of the draft town centre fringe policy are the requirements for significant infrastructure and environmental improvements, without which the radical transformation of the area will not be realised, and development will not be attracted to the area. Works required include creating a new green corridor focussed on the River Skerne, flood mitigation works, remediating contaminated land, decommissioning the gas holder. Road network improvements are also vital, to ensure that new development can be accommodated without inner ring road traffic congestion, to improve connectivity across the inner ring road to and from the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists, and to improve the public realm.
28. The preferred option envisages that initial works and development will be in the area adjacent to the southern part of St. Cuthberts Way, followed by remediation and redevelopment of sites in the northern part of the area, at the top end of Valley Street/John Street. An extension to town centre uses into the Garden Street area could also come forward in the early years of the plan period, if it can be tied into the existing town centre by significant improvements to pedestrian connectivity across the inner ring road at Freemans Place/Northgate junction.
29. The Town Centre Fringe masterplan envisages a realigned Inner Ring Road, but work is not sufficiently advanced yet to identify the specific tracts of land and

buildings that would need to be safeguarded from development. Further consultations on this aspect will need to take place with affected parties prior to the Publication Draft Making and Growing Places document being finalised.

30. It has been clear from the outset of work on the Town Centre Fringe that significant public sector funding/investment will be required to deliver the ambitions for the area. Therefore, a Draft Development Procurement Strategy is being prepared and will be consulted on, so that people can see and comment on how the Council thinks the area will be developed and where the money to do so could come from. This will be vital in demonstrating that the overall proposals for the Town Centre Fringe are deliverable. As the local plan will be relying on the Town Centre Fringe for significant amounts of new housing and employment development, the Development Procurement Strategy will be a key piece of evidence that the Council will rely on to demonstrate deliverability, and hence the soundness, of the local plan overall.

Existing Commitments

31. Draft Policy MGP4 reaffirms the Council's commitment to supporting the delivery of new housing and mixed use development on strategic sites that already have planning permission, i.e. Central Park, Lingfield Point and West Park. The draft policy indicates the key planning requirements for each site, should the landowners seek to renegotiate the terms of their existing planning permissions, or when further details are submitted.

North West Fringe

32. Development in this location is critical to the delivery of sufficient new housing in the Borough throughout the plan period and beyond. Up to about 400 new homes could still be built on the existing West Park area, and a further 600+ homes are envisaged in the area beyond this, encompassing Mount Pleasant Farm and Stag House Farm (south of Newton Lane). This area emerged as the preferred option after considering options that also included land to the east of the A68 West Auckland Road.
33. The draft policy (MGP 5) plans for a new neighbourhood in this area (see **Appendix 2c**), with supporting community and green infrastructure. Key planning requirements include structural landscaping along the A1(M) boundary, significant new areas of open space including playing fields, a new link road between Edward Pease Way and Newton Lane to help distribute traffic arising from the development and allow bus penetration, and links to and enhancement of walking and cycling routes, to help provide attractive alternatives to travelling by car. Part of the site could also be used for high-quality office development, complementary to the employment land offer planned elsewhere (see paragraphs 17-21 above).
34. The draft policy also allows for the possibility of new school(s), local shops and a GP surgery being provided on the site towards the southern end, but the means of funding and sectoral ambition for these are still being investigated. Given the scale of the development and the economies of scale that arise, the full 30% affordable housing required by Core Strategy policy will be required, and the highest levels of

energy efficiency and sustainable building design/layout. The draft policy also requires a masterplan to be prepared for the area and agreed by the Council to guide new development.

35. The Council-owned Stag House Farm part of the site has previously been consulted on as a potential site for accommodating Gypsies and travellers, and prompted responses from some local residents that they did not want any development on this site. Significant local interest in the draft policy is therefore expected through this forthcoming consultation.
36. Off site works may also be needed on Newton Lane, Woodlands Road and West Auckland Road, including the junctions at Cockerton and Woodland Road/Carmel Road North

Eastern Urban Fringe

37. This is the area at the eastern edge of the urban area, beyond Red Hall and Lingfield Point. For the new housing development, the preferred option (draft Policy MGP 6) makes provision for about 250 dwellings from 2021 to 2026 to the north of the Eastern Transport Corridor (see **Appendix 2d**), about 100 more than was indicated in the adopted Core Strategy. These homes would be the first phase(s) of a larger new neighbourhood, which would continue to be developed well beyond 2026. The planning requirements include 30% affordable housing, at least 5% of new housing to meet specific needs, significant tree planting and landscaping belts alongside the A66 and wildflower meadows, wetlands and woodland within the functional floodplain of the River Skerne. Other requirements include a significant area for new playing fields and reservation of land to allow for the possibility of new education and primary health provision. Up to 400sqm of local convenience shops would also have to be provided. An overall masterplan will have to be prepared for the area and agreed with the Council, and should ensure the new neighbourhood is integrated and linked with neighbouring Red Hall, and the residential areas of Lingfield Point.
38. Over 75 hectares of land south of the Eastern Transport Corridor would be for a mix of employment uses, at Morton Palms, Lingfield Park, Link 66 and Yarm Road South (see plan at **Appendix 2a**). Key to unlocking the development potential of all the housing and employment land at the Eastern Urban Fringe is improvements to the A66(T) to ensure that it can cope with the additional traffic likely to be generated by all the new development. Signalised roundabouts will be needed where the Eastern Transport Corridor, Yarm Road and Stockton Road meet the A66 (T).

Durham Tees Valley Airport

39. The adopted Core Strategy approach to Durham Tees Valley Airport is based on the published freight and passenger expansion plans of the airport operator at the time. The economic downturn means that these plans are now not likely to materialise and because poor economic conditions are ongoing, and the airport's operators are investigating a range of complementary business development

options to help sustain a viable airport. A revised policy approach is therefore proposed.

40. A recent Darlington Business and Sites Premises Review (NLP, 2013) recommended that employment land at the airport be retained for only airport related uses, rather than be identified for general employment use. This recommendation is founded on the sound planning argument that a more relaxed designation could draw investment away from better located sites in the Borough.
41. However, this approach would limit the options for undertaking further development that could be needed to help sustain a viable airport. The airport's operators, in partnership with Darlington and Stockton Councils and the Tees Valley LEP, are investigating all operational, business and development options available to sustain a viable regional airport. A bid for RGF funding to support infrastructure works to open up land for employment use to the south of the runway has recently been submitted by Peel.
42. The airport is important to the Tees Valley economy. The proposed policy, which would apply to about 225ha of land at the airport (see **Appendix 2e**), therefore sets out the circumstances in which the Council could positively consider planning applications for non-airport related uses there. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that normally inappropriate development at the airport is only considered if all other avenues for sustaining the airport have been fully explored, and that the amount and type of any development permitted enables some tangible physical improvements or developments that will help the airport to become viable over the longer term. The proposed policy also seeks to ensure that any new development that is permitted will not constrain existing or future aviation.

New Housing Development

43. The total number of new homes being planned for is about 5800 over the 15 year period from 2011-26, as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. Changes to Government planning policy since the Core Strategy was adopted require at least 5% more land to be identified for delivery in the first five years, and because only 400 new homes have been built so far compared to about 700 that were planned in the first two years, more new housing land allocations are needed than originally envisaged.
44. Draft Policy MGP16 plans for 1400 new dwellings by 2016, and about 450 per annum thereafter. It identifies land for a 'five years plus 5%' worth of new housing from the first full year after this Making and Growing Places part of the Local Plan is adopted, i.e. from 2015. The plan makes up the shortfall in new housebuilding that has occurred since 2011 and until 2015 in the later years of the plan period, from 2021, by which time the housing market is expected to have fully recovered and housebuilders are more likely to be willing to build at the rate required.
45. This is considered a pragmatic response to Government policy. There is robust evidence from 2009 to present to show that the availability of suitable and deliverable housing land in the Borough has had little bearing on the amount of new

housing delivered; it is access to finance for both housebuilders and potential home buyers that has stalled delivery locally.

46. Proposed land allocations to accommodate about 2300 dwellings have been identified in this document (see **Appendix 2d**), alongside about 3000 new homes that are expected from schemes that already have planning permission and/or are completed, and about 450 that are expected to come forward on windfalls, i.e. small unidentified sites and larger unanticipated sites.
47. New housing land has been identified by selecting sites according to the locational strategy set out in the Core Strategy (which focussed new development within the main urban area and at the North West and Eastern Urban Fringes), and a range of criteria, such as proximity to shops and services, access to public transport, and making use of previously developed land. Some previously developed land identified as potential housing land in an earlier Accommodating Growth Issues and Options Report (November 2010) is not now proposed as allocations, because continuing low land values alongside rising site preparation and building costs mean that there is little prospect of its viable development within the plan period, and/or the land would be better used for other purposes. Examples of this are land off Houghton Road at Alexander Street, and some of the land south of Albert Road and east of North Road that was, until recently, reserved for the cross town route.
48. Areas like Central Park, Town Centre Fringe, Lingfield Point and West Park are expected to deliver about 2300 homes, other sites in the urban area about 1500 homes and new strategic allocations at the North West Fringe and Eastern Fringe a further 900 dwellings. In total, these can deliver at least 80% of the total requirement. Overall, about 50% of new housing is expected to come forward on previously developed land and about 50% on greenfield land, with higher proportions of greenfield land needed up to 2020, to reflect the more marginal viability of some previously developed land until the housing market fully recovers.
49. Within the urban area, several new sites have been identified that were former school playing fields – the playing field of the former Alderman Leach Primary School (Ha8), one of the playing fields of the former Eastbourne School (Ha1), part of the playing field of the former Beaumont Hill School on Glebe Road (Ha5), and the playing field area of the former Springfield Primary School (Ha4). Because this land was associated with former schools, compared to other greenfield sites, e.g. at the urban fringe, it is generally very well located in relation to shops, services and other facilities, and in the ability for development there to be readily integrated with the existing areas of housing.
50. In the case of Eastbourne, Springfield and Glebe Road, it will be a condition of development that any playing field area lost must be re-provided elsewhere in the urban area and be available for use before development starts. In the case of Glebe Road, both part of the former Upper School and the former Middle School fields are being proposed for housing development, but to reflect that there is currently informal recreation and kickabout use of part of the southern site next to Green Lane, this area will be safeguarded as open space for use by the local community. In the case of the former Alderman Leach School playing field, the Council will make about £20,000 available to enhance sports provision elsewhere

in the Borough. If these sites were not identified, then further housing land would have to be identified elsewhere, e.g. at the urban fringe.

51. The proposed re-provision and investment outlined above is in accord with an approach agreed with Sport England which, for reasons of better management and availability of good quality pitches, changing facilities and car parking, seeks to move towards a distribution of playing pitches at a few well managed hubs – at Eastbourne Sports Complex, Blackwell Meadows and Longfield Academy and later in the plan period, the Darlington Arena area. Additional provision is also proposed at the North West Urban Fringe and Eastern Urban Fringe alongside new housing development there. For more local needs, other satellite sites are provided, e.g, at Haughton Education Village and Hummersknott Academy. Other publicly accessible pitches within parks e.g. North Park and South Park will continue to be protected and available for casual and competitive use. This is consistent with the approach set out in the adopted Core Strategy (Policy CS18), the Playing Pitch Strategy 2009 and reflected in draft Policy MGP26 in the Preferred Options document.
52. There are also a few smaller sites that are part of larger open spaces used for informal recreation. The largest of these is at Hartington Lane/Bellburn Lane (Ha11 on the plan at **Appendix 2d**), where 32 new homes are proposed on land that was reserved in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan for a replacement for Reid Street School; there is no realistic prospect of that proposal now. Other examples are land for 8 homes at Eggleston View, Branksome (Ha14) and 22 at Hammond Drive, Skerne Park (Ha21). In all cases, recreation land has only been identified where it would not result in inadequate access for people to quality open space in that local area, according to the standards being proposed elsewhere in the Preferred Options document (draft Policy MGP24). A condition of the development of these sites is that quality improvements are made to the larger remaining open space, for example through quality landscaping and planting schemes.
53. A limited amount of land outside the existing limits to development has had to be identified to meet requirements. The three most suitable and available sites are all in the Harrowgate Hill/Beaumont Hill area of town (sites Ha2, 6 and 15 on the plan at **Appendix 2d**). The three sites amount to about 150 homes, and will only be able to come forward with junction and highway improvements to Burtree Lane and this part of North Road. To make these sites acceptable in planning terms, a range of other infrastructure will also be a condition of development e.g. provision of school places, open space provision, improvements to sports facilities.

Top-end Executive Housing

54. As identified in the adopted Core Strategy, the Borough can benefit from identifying land for top-end executive housing to help meet the sub regional needs. Wynyard is still expected to be the main location for providing large numbers of this type of housing in the Tees Valley, but Darlington is well placed to put forward a complementary offer, having been identified as another location that would be attractive to the market.

55. A number of sites on the edge of villages have been put forward by landowners/developers, and the proposed relocation of Blackwell Golf Club to Stressholme (Minute C45, 2012 refers) has provided the opportunity to consider suitable land in this area for this type of housing.
56. It is not possible to quantify how much new housing of this type is needed, but a criteria-based site assessment process has been used to identify the most suitable site(s). The best performing site in the assessment was land at Blackwell Grange. Taking into account the need and desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building and the key features of the historic parkland, the draft policy proposes the allocation of four separate parcels of land there (see **Appendix 2d**), capable of accommodating a total of about 52 dwellings, with provision for a review in the latter part of the plan period to allocate further land elsewhere in the Borough should uptake at Blackwell Grange exceed expectations, or the land proves unattractive to the market.
57. It is not proposed that the land be made available for general housing, should it not all come forward for top-end executive housing during the plan period, because well located land, attractive to this segment of the market, is a scarce resource and should be safeguarded for this purpose over the longer term.

Housing Regeneration – Red Hall

58. The adopted Core Strategy (Policy CS12) indicates that the Council will support the regeneration and improvement of existing housing areas, and refers to the Haughton East ward. Draft Policy MGP18 provides more detail on this, identifying the area (see plan at **Appendix 2f**) which will become the focus for housing and regeneration activity from 2014/15, to be guided by a masterplan that will be prepared for the area. The objectives are to improve and increase the housing stock, diversify tenure, improve access to and integration with surrounding areas and the rest of the town, and create a more liveable residential environment.
59. As part of this, land comprising the former Red Hall Riding Stables and environs has been identified as capable of accommodating up to 120 new homes, but further work with the local community in developing the masterplan will establish the exact capacity for new housing of this site, taking into account any existing community use of this area and things like environmental constraints.

Housing Intensification

60. A draft policy MGP19 is proposed as the first step to trying to reduce the problems associated with high concentrations of self contained flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) around Corporation Road in the Northgate ward. It will complement the efforts of other Council services and partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and other local environmental problems in the area.
61. The draft policy will only allow further dwellings of this type to be created if specific amenity criteria can be met, and proposals will not result in the loss of small family housing stock. To be most effective, an Article 4 direction will need to be prepared,

to enable planning control to be exercised over smaller HMOs that currently enjoy permitted development rights.

62. A proposed 'area of saturation' to which the policy would apply will be indicated on the draft Policies Map and is on the plan at **Appendix 2g**.
63. The draft policy also includes criteria for the consideration of garden development.

Accommodating Travelling Groups

64. Draft Policy MGP 20 sets a target of a minimum of 35 additional permanent Gypsy/Traveller pitches to be provided within the Borough by 2021, and indicates that this will be met on land at Neasham Road adjacent to the existing site (20 pitches), and at Oakwood Farm, Roundhill Road (3-5 pitches). The draft policy also identifies land at Honeypt Lane for a further 8-12 pitches to meet medium term need, to be delivered in the period 2016-2021. All the proposed sites are indicated on the plan attached as **Appendix 2h**.
65. New pitches at Neasham Road are being delivered with HCA funding, alongside works to improve pitches on the existing site.
66. Other 'windfall' sites will need to come forward through the planning application process to meet needs from 2021 and to meet any additional needs arising before then, and planning applications for these will need to be considered against the adopted Core Strategy Policy CS13.
67. The draft policy also sets out the main planning requirements for the layout of new Gypsy and Traveller sites, to ensure that a satisfactory living environment is created.
68. The draft policy reflect Cabinet's earlier consideration of and decision on this issue in July 2012 (Minute C28(3) refers). Further work since then has clarified the timing of delivery on the key sites.
69. No need for a site for Travelling Showpeople has been identified for Darlington. However the Council has been approached by a family regarding possible sites, but nothing suitable has yet been identified. Without a specific allocation, any site would have to come forward as a windfall.

Development Limits and Development in the Countryside

70. The development limits for all the main villages and the edge of the urban area have been reviewed. This is to ensure that they take account of any new development that may have occurred on the edge of the urban area or villages since the existing Local Plan Proposals Map was prepared, to rectify any inaccuracies or inconsistencies in deciding where to draw the limits.
71. The main areas where the proposed revised limits are significantly different to the current ones are at the North West Urban Fringe, Eastern Urban Fringe and in the Harrowgate Hill/Beaumont Hill area, where the limits have been extended to

include the land allocations indicated elsewhere in the Preferred Options document. The last change effectively acknowledges that Beaumont Hill is not separate from the urban area. The main changes around the villages are at Summerhouses and Low Coniscliffe, proposed for consistency reasons and to reflect new development.

72. The proposed limits to development will be shown on the draft Policies Map and are referenced through draft Policy MGP8 of the Preferred Options document.
73. The policy framework for areas outside of development limits is provided by Core Strategy Policy CS1, draft Policy MGP8 and draft Policies MGP 9 & 10. Since the Core Strategy was adopted, the amount of national policy on suitable uses and forms of development in the countryside has significantly contracted. As an interim measure, Cabinet resolved (Minute C56(4), October 2012) that material contained in previous national planning documents be used as interim planning policy until included in an appropriate adopted development plan document. These policies, together with an appendix are intended to do that, specifically with respect to justifying new permanent residential dwellings in the countryside, and to ensure that alterations, changes of use and new uses in the countryside are appropriate, and achieve the right balance between supporting rural enterprise and sustainability and safeguarding the intrinsic value of the countryside and the land uses that need to be located there.

Other Content

74. Section 7 of the Preferred Options document sets out draft policies to secure a distinctive, greener, cleaner environment. Draft Policy MGP 21 seeks to conserve the Borough's heritage and archaeological remains, particularly assets of railway or Quaker origin. It commits the Council to preparing and keeping up to date Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans, and to preparing a Local List of heritage assets of local interest.
75. The section also includes draft Policy MGP22 (Local landscape character), which identifies and protects the openness and green infrastructure functions of rural gaps, green wedges and local green spaces, and the value of the strategic and local green corridors, strategic historic routes, and the Borough's urban and rural parklands. Draft Policy MGP25 seeks to ensure that appropriate recognition is given to site and features of biodiversity and geodiversity interest, and sets out the requirements for developers as to how they should design developments so there is no net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. It also identifies specific actions that will be taken to improve biodiversity, such as proposing new Local Nature Reserves, including Red Hall Wetland, Mill Lane and Cocker Beck.
76. The section also includes two policies on green infrastructure. Draft Policy MGP23 identifies the land that will be protected and improved for green infrastructure purposes, It identifies the amount of new greenspace that will be required as part of major new developments, and identifies five sites where new allotment provision is proposed, to help meet existing demand and that expected over the plan period. The five sites are at Muscar House Farm (50 plots), within the North West Urban Fringe (50 plots), at The Ridgeway (12 plots), within the Eastern Urban Fringe (50 plots) and to the rear of Bylands Way (6 plots). Draft Policy MGP24 sets out the standards for the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space that will be

sought in each of five sub areas of the Borough – North West, Central, South East, South West and North East to meet residents needs to 2026.

77. The final policy of Section 7 sets out standards for playing fields across the Borough. To ensure sufficient provision throughout the plan period, about 34ha of land is identified for community teams to meet the increasing demand for pitch sports, particularly from junior football and rugby union by extending Blackwell Meadows, and creating new hubs (new playing pitches plus ancillary facilities) at Darlington Arena and as part of significant new housing at the North West Urban Fringe and Eastern Urban Fringe (see also paragraph 51 above). Once proposals elsewhere in the document for the development of existing playing fields have been taken into account all playing fields will be protected by draft policy MPG 24.
78. Section 8 of the Preferred Options document deals with transport, with the overall aim of delivering a transport system that is balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes. Once adopted, this section will replace Chapter 9 of the adopted Core Strategy, because there have been significant changes to the Council's and Tees Valley LEP's priorities for transport investment, and to the options for funding new schemes. It includes draft policies on to deliver a more sustainable transport network (MGP27), to improve access and accessibility (MGP28), and to address parking provision (MGP29).
79. Progress on the Town Centre Fringe masterplan means that the inner ring road is now the focus for improvements to the local highway network, and for works to improve linkages for pedestrians and cyclists from the Town Centre, through the Fringe to Bank Top and North Road stations and to Central Park. Land is also safeguarded for junction improvements on the A66(T) at Yarm Road, Little Burdon and Blands Corner. Provision is also made for improvements to the rail network, including improvements to Bank Top Station and to allow outstanding proposals for the Tees Valley Metro to be delivered, including relocating the rail halt serving the airport.
80. The draft policies also seek to promote public transport and use of sustainable travel modes. Roads that are primary and secondary public transport routes will be identified on the Policies Map and will be priorities for resolving any congestion 'pinch points', whilst new development will be required to locate where there is access by public transport, cycling and walking or where links to existing networks to achieve this can be made. All new buildings or proposals to change the use of or alter buildings to which the general public and employees have access will be required, where practical and reasonable, to provide suitable access and facilities for people with disabilities and people with young children.
81. The approach to parking set out in the Preferred Options document (draft Policy MGP 29) takes account of work being undertaken to prepare a Draft Parking Strategy, and supports the locational strategy of this plan, which prioritises supporting and maintaining the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. The proposal is for a small number of time limited short stay parking spaces in central locations with wider short stay provision within the Inner Ring Road, and outside of the ring road, spaces will generally be protected for long stay parking. Within the plan period, there will need to be a multi-storey car park around the Beaumont Street/Feethams area, but work is not sufficiently advanced on this to identify a

specific site. This will need to be included in the next version of the Making and Growing Places document, the Publication Draft.

82. Draft Policy MGP 29 also seeks to secure one double electric vehicle changing point (2 spaces) for car parks of up to 50 spaces as part of commercial developments or public facilities, and an additional double charging point up to a maximum of three, for every additional 50 spaces provided. Sufficient safe and secure places are also required for all new development, including for people with disabilities.
83. Section 9 of the Preferred Options document sets out draft policies for physical infrastructure (MGP30) and social and community infrastructure (MGP31). They encompass the provision of utilities, facilities for indoor sports, primary care, arts and culture and schools, and burial space. Land is reserved for a new GP surgery south of Yarm Road, Middleton St. George, and for future burials at an extension to West Cemetery, and masterplanning of the North West Urban Fringe, Town Centre Fringe and Eastern Urban fringe will allow for the possibility of new primary care and education provision, as appropriate. The intention to work with education and health providers to meet identified needs and to address geographical gaps in provision is stated, and the approach to education provision is to make the best use of existing facilities, meeting needs within existing buildings or within existing school sites where possible, or unless funding is secured by an education provider for provision on a new site.
84. Section 10 contains draft policies MGP 32 to MGP 35 setting out the Council's preferred approach to addressing detailed development management issues, such as safeguarding amenity, sustainable design and climate change adaptation, sustainable drainage systems, and airport safety. All these draft policies are designed to help future proof new development and help deliver sustainable development.

What the Making and Growing Places doesn't cover

85. The Making and Growing Places document does not say anything about future uses for the former Arts Centre, nor proposals for Durham Tees Valley Airport, because either discussions about these are still ongoing, or firm proposals have yet to emerge. The same applies to identifying specific land for a new food supermarket, and for identifying land reservations of the inner ring road and a site for a multi-storey car park at Feethams/Beaumont Street. If enough detail and appropriate consultations have been carried out by the time the next version of this Making and Growing Places document (the Publication Draft) needs to be finalised later this year, then they will be included then. The risk associated with this is that because only formal representations can be submitted by the public and others at this stage, there will be little scope for the Council to negotiate away any objections, potentially resulting in more matter needing to be resolved at the more costly and high profile Public Examination stage.

Implications for Council owned land

86. A key test of soundness of Local Plan documents (and which will be publicly examined), is that its provision must have a reasonable prospect of being delivered. In instances where Council owned land has been allocated for new development, the Council will need to show that it is committed to disposing of the land for the intended purpose. This is particularly important for land identified for new housing which needs to be brought forward in the period up to 2020.
87. Some of the Council land identified for new housing already benefits from resolutions to dispose, for example Eastbourne Nursery and Alverton Drive. The sites for which there are not currently resolutions to dispose in place, and which need to deliver new housing by 2020 are as follows, and can be identified on the plan at **Appendix 2d**:-
- (a) North West Urban Fringe (Hs5 part) - land south of Newton Lane at Stag House Farm makes up XX ha of this wider site
 - (b) Two sites at Blackwell Grange (He1 and 2)
 - (c) Hartington Way/Bellburn Lane (Ha11)
 - (d) Land at Carmel School (Ha13)
 - (e) Hammond Drive (Ha14)
 - (f) Rear of Scargill Shops (Ha19)
 - (g) Eggleston View (Ha20)
88. Land at Eastbourne School (Ha1), that is also required, is the subject of a separate item on this agenda. Land at Springfield School (Ha4) is likely to be an agenda item for a future Cabinet meeting. Like privately owned sites, in estimating the capital receipt that the Council will be able to realise from the sale of its land, account will need to be taken of the costs to potential developers of meeting the planning requirements for the site. Subject to site viability, these could include payments secured by means of a Section 106 agreement to contribute to social, green or physical infrastructure works and for the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with adopted development plan policies and the Council's adopted Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.
89. Council owned land within the Town Centre Fringe may also be required to help deliver new housing from 2016, but work to plan the delivery of the masterplan is not sufficiently advanced to identify specific sites there at this stage. Examples could be the Cattle Mart and car park area near Bank Top Station, and the lorry park land at Chesnut Street.
90. Implementing the Town Centre Fringe masterplan is also likely to require the Council to acquire land to enable the delivery of the key schemes needed to underpin the regeneration of the area. Parts of these sites may well be available for disposal as development opportunities at a later stage.

Financial Implications

91. If realised, the new development proposed could result in significant additional new money for the Council, through the collection of Council tax and business rates from new residents and businesses, and through the award of New Homes Bonus by the Government for completed new homes, new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and empty homes brought back into use. Contributions may also be sought from developers for/towards some of the infrastructure that is required in the wider community as a consequence of the development.
92. In addition, a number of Council owned sites will need to be marketed within the short to medium term, to deliver the housing element of the spatial strategy. This may mean that the Council cannot realise as much value from the land as it could if the disposals were delayed until the housing market has fully recovered. But elsewhere, the work to identify new housing sites has resulted in Council owned land which has only has recreation use value could have much higher residential value, e.g. land at Hammond Drive (Ha14), Eggleston View (Ha20), etc.
93. Implementation of some of the policies and proposals in the Making and Growing Places document will require a long term commitment to resource support, e.g. the Town Centre Fringe, for which spending will be agreed separately through the Town Centre Fringe Development Procurement Plan.
94. In the short to medium term, the resources required to complete preparation of the Making and Growing Places document will be met within existing budgets. A budget has been identified to cover the costs of a Public Examination, which is likely to be an expenditure item in 2014/15. Resources for planning policy work will need to be continued beyond adoption of Making and Growing Places, to complete the supplementary planning documents and other work necessary for the effective implementation of the policies in it.

Legal Implications

95. This Preferred Options document has been prepared and the consultation proposed to fulfil the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as they apply to local plan making prior to preparing a Publication Draft.

Corporate Landlord Advice

96. See Financial Implications above.

Equalities Considerations

97. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQA) and Disability Equalities Impact Assessment (DEIA) have been carried out on the draft policies and proposals, and will be published alongside the Preferred Options. There are two draft policies that specifically address the needs of minority groups and disabled people – MGP 20 allocates land to meet the accommodation needs of travelling groups, and MGP 28 includes consideration of the needs of disabled people in tackling access and

accessibility. Policies for development at the North West and Eastern Urban Fringes strategic locations (MGP 5 and 6) also include for at least 5% of new housing to meet specific housing needs of older people and people with disabilities. Any findings of EQA or DEIA work that have not been addressed in the draft policies will be considered in preparing the Publication Draft document, alongside any comments received as a result of the proposed consultation.

Consultation and Outcome of Consultation

98. Preparation of this Preferred Options document has drawn on work done on a range of projects and themes across the Council, e.g. Housing Strategy, Town Centre Fringe Masterplan, Central Park as well as other relatively recent planning policy work, such as the on the Planning Obligations SPD and the Core Strategy before that. In many instances, these work streams will have included public and other consultations, and responses to those consultations relevant to preparing this document have been considered.
99. The recommendations are for consultations on this document, and the public and others will have a further opportunity to make their view known, before the Council agrees to adopt the finalised Making and Growing Places document.
100. Subject to the recommendation in this report being agreed, the consultation planned will be for 6 weeks, from 21st June to 2nd August inclusive. All Members will be briefed and have an opportunity to comment on the document at the start of the consultation period. Several consultation events will be held in the areas of the Borough which are likely to be most affected by the policies and proposals included in the document, together with events in the Town Centre towards the end of the consultation period, to provide an opportunity for people to talk to Planning Officers if they have been unable to attend earlier events, or if they want to talk about more general policies and proposals that would apply to large parts of the Borough