



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Agenda

2.00 pm

Thursday, 9 January 2025

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington. DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Skertingham Masterplan –
 - (a) Call in Request – Report of Councillors Henderson, Marshall, Durham and H Scott
 - (b) Cabinet Report – Report of the Chief Executive considered by Cabinet 3 December 2024
 - (c) Call-in Response – Report of the Chief Executive

(Pages 3 - 112)

4. Questions

Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 1 January 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Coe, Baker, Dillon, Durham, Haszeldine, Henderson, Marshall, McGill, Ray and Mrs Scott

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Olivia Hugill, Democratic Officer, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays E-mail: olivia.hugill@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405363

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JANUARY 2025**

SKERNINGHAM MASTERPLAN

Purpose of Report

We have requested a call-in of Cabinet's decision in relation to the Skerningham Masterplan (Minute C76) The reasons we have requested the call-in is to determine details omitted from the Cabinet report :-

- Page 24 of the Masterplan quotes The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings. However, Department of Education has this figure higher at 25 primary and 13 secondary pupils per 100 dwellings. They also go on to say that larger homes (such as the ones in Skerningham Garden Village) and newer houses will typically have more school aged children than this. [Fact Sheet 5. New homes and school Places GOV_UK](#).
The Local Plan also references school yields. However, these yields are different to the yields in the Masterplan which are lower. This suggests that the Skerningham Masterplan is not consistent with the Local Plan Policy.
We feel this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to look at the data in respect of these assumptions and the discrepancy between the Council's numbers, the Department of Education's numbers and the Local Plan.
- According to a submission on 30 August 2024 to Planning Application 24/00772/FULE from Paul Richardson on behalf of the Education Department [Consultee Comments for Planning Application 24/00772/FULE](#), it is stated that there is no spare capacity at Education Village for secondary pupils. This means that pupils will need to go to Longfield School creating a longer journey for residents living east of the East Coast Mainline.

Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling in respect of additional car journeys in relation to this and the road capacity to ensure the infrastructure phasing is acceptable. In reviewing the Traffic Modelling info in relation to the Springfield Park Link Road which is very old, it's useful from the point that it has traffic modelling in relation to Skerningham Garden Village [Skerningham Garden Village Local Plan](#) (page 9). Without the Local Distributor Road in place and assuming 600 houses have been built at the top of Barmpton Lane, it quotes a 47.6% increase in traffic down Whinbush Way.

The Systra traffic modelling done in January 2021 referenced in the Local Plan assumes that part of the Skerningham Link Road (Local Distributor Road) will be built

from Barmpton Lane to Bishopton Lane in 2025. It also assumes that the Local Distributor Road would be completed in 2030 which was stated by Andy Casey in the Local Plan hearings. I believe that this modelling, now 5 years out of date, assuming infrastructure in place 5 years early is now of very limited value. There's no clarity on whether this traffic modelling was based on the assumption that Skerningham Garden Village would be a 20 minute neighbourhood and whether they had factored in school trips. The Local Distributor Road is not scheduled to be completed until 2036 by which time there will be 1,450 houses built with no additional schools.

We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling which would include:

- a. Traffic at peak time around school time assuming pupils are using the existing schools. Assumptions on per number of pupils per 100 houses should also show numbers based on the Department of Education.
 - b. Traffic modelling for general non school traffic
 - c. Traffic modelling should also factor in the additional traffic coming from the Burtree Garden Village
 - d. Traffic modelling should look at how Whinbush Way/ Salters Lane North / Longfield Road / North Road are impacted
- The Systra Report entitled Skerningham Railway Crossing - Feasibility Study looks at the various routes for the Local Distributor Road to cross the railway. It considered 4 options, all of which avoided the woods. Point 5.1.5 states 'An area of dense woodland is located to the east of the ECML. For each option, a roundabout has been shown to the east of the ECML to ensure that the proposed link road can divert past and not impact upon the woodland'. However, the Masterplan shows the road going straight through the Skerningham plantation. In the Local Plan, policy H10, item i, vi), it states that wherever possible the Skerningham Garden Village development should retain and enhance hedgerow and trees that contribute to landscape character.

We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of explaining what options were considered and giving reasons for the decision. Scrutiny would like to review any relevant documents that consider these routes and see why the decision was taken to choose an option that goes through Skerningham Woods.

We would like to discuss these issues with the relevant Portfolio Holder, relevant Director and Head of Service

Councillors Henderson, Marshall, Durham and Scott

QUAD OF AIMS
(TO BE COMPLETED WHEN MAKING CALL-IN)

Title : Skerningham Masterplan Acceptance

Cabinet Minute (if appropriate) : C76

REASON FOR ITEM/CALL-IN	RESOURCE
<p>1. Page 24 of the Masterplan quotes 'The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings. However, Department of Education has this figure higher at 25 primary and 13 secondary pupils per 100 dwellings. They also go on to say that larger homes (such as the ones in Skerningham Garden Village) and newer houses will typically have more school aged children than this. <u>Fact Sheet 5: New homes and school places - GOV.UK.</u></p> <p>The Local Plan also references school yields. However, these yields are different to the yields in the Masterplan which are lower. This suggests that the Skerningham Masterplan is not consistent with the Local Plan Policy.</p> <p>We feel this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to look at the data in respect of these assumptions and the discrepancy between the Council's numbers, the Department of Education's numbers and the Local Plan.</p> <p>2. According to a submission on 30 August 2024 to Planning Application 24/00772/FULE from Paul Richardson on behalf of the Education Department <u>Consultee Comments for Planning Application 24/00772/FULE</u>, it is stated that there is no spare capacity at Education Village for secondary pupils. This means that pupils will need to go to Longfield School creating a longer journey for residents living east of the East Coast Mainline.</p> <p>Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling in respect of additional car journeys in relation to this and the road capacity to ensure the infrastructure phasing is acceptable. In reviewing the Traffic Modelling info in relation to the Springfield Park Link Road which is very old, it's useful from the point that it has traffic modelling in relation to Skerningham Garden Village Skerningham Garden Village Local Plan (page 9). Without the Local Distributor Road in place and assuming 600 houses have been built at the top of Barmpton Lane, it quotes a 47.6% increase in traffic down Whinbush Way.</p> <p>The Systra traffic modelling done in January 2021 referenced in the Local Plan assumes that part of the Skerningham Link Road (Local Distributor Road) will be built from Barmpton Lane to Bishopston Lane in 2025. It also assumes that the Local Distributor Road would be completed in 2030 which was stated by Andy Casey in the Local Plan hearings. I believe that this</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant Portfolio Holder 2. Relevant AD/Head of Service 3. Democratic Services Officer

QUAD OF AIMS
(TO BE COMPLETED WHEN MAKING CALL-IN OR REQUESTING AN ITEM ON AGENDA)

<p>modelling, now 5 years out of date, assuming infrastructure in place 5 years early is now of very limited value. There's no clarity on whether this traffic modelling was based on the assumption that Skerningham Garden Village would be a 20 minute neighbourhood and whether they had factored in school trips. The Local Distributor Road is not scheduled to be completed until 2036 by which time there will be 1,450 houses built with no additional schools.</p> <p>We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling which would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Traffic at peak time around school time assuming pupils are using the existing schools. Assumptions on per number of pupils per 100 houses should also show numbers based on the Department of Education. b. Traffic modelling for general non school traffic c. Traffic modelling should also factor in the additional traffic coming from the Burtree Garden Village d. Traffic modelling should look at how Whinbush Way / Salters Lane North / Longfield Road / North Road are impacted <p>3. The Systra Report entitled Skerningham Railway Crossing - Feasibility Study looks at the various routes for the Local Distributor Road to cross the railway. It considered 4 options, all of which avoided the woods. Point 5.1.5 states 'An area of dense woodland is located to the east of the ECML. For each option, a roundabout has been shown to the east of the ECML to ensure that the proposed link road can divert past and not impact upon the woodland'. However, the Masterplan shows the road going straight through the Skerningham plantation. In the Local Plan, policy H10, item i, vi), it states that wherever possible the Skerningham Garden Village development should retain and enhance hedgerow and trees that contribute to landscape character.</p> <p>We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of explaining what options were considered and giving reasons for the decision. Scrutiny would like to review any relevant documents that consider these routes and see why the decision was taken to choose an option that goes through Skerningham Woods.</p>	
PROCESS	ANTICIPATED OUTCOME
To discuss with Portfolio Holder and AD/Head of Service	1. To review the additional information and scrutinise the evidence

QUAD OF AIMS

(TO BE COMPLETED WHEN MAKING CALL-IN OR REQUESTING AN ITEM ON AGENDA)

	<p>2. To consider the decision by Cabinet to accept the Comprehensive Masterplan and form a view as to whether the matter should be referred back to Cabinet or not. If so, Scrutiny should set out the nature of its concerns, what it expects Cabinet to reconsider and any alternative recommended action.</p>
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COUNCILLOR *R Henderson*

COUNCILLOR *A. J. Marshall*

COUNCILLOR *J. W. Orr*

COUNCILLOR *Debbie S Scott*

Signed – Assistant Director of Law and Governance

Dated

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**CABINET
3 DECEMBER 2024**

SKERNINGHAM MASTERPLAN CONSIDERATION

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To gain members agreement that the Skerningham Masterplan Document is consistent with the Darlington Borough Local Plan Policy H 10 and the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Summary

2. Policy H 10 of the Local Plan requires a comprehensive Masterplan including an infrastructure phasing plan be prepared in consultation with the community prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site, that informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development. The Masterplan shall be led by the applicant(s) and should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Council's design code, a strong understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surrounds and incorporate the key principles for the development as set out in points a to i of the Policy.
3. A final version of the Masterplan has been prepared by Litchfields on behalf of Theakston's Land and Banks Group, the two companies with the largest amount of land interest in the area. The final version of the Masterplan is attached at **Appendix 1**.
4. The production of the Masterplan has followed the requirement of community involvement with a consultation exercise running from 30 October to 30 November 2023. This involved a series of public engagement events. Following that consultation the responses received were reviewed and some amendments were made to the Masterplan. The summary of those comments and amendments are attached at **Appendix 2**.
5. Officers have had discussions with the authors of the document and further amendments were made. Following external legal advice officers are confident that the Masterplan does not conflict with the Local Plan Policy H 10 or the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD.

6. The Garden Communities Officer from Homes England has also been involved with the process and is content that the Masterplan has met the terms of public engagement and does not conflict with the Garden Communities principles nor the Local Plan or Design Code SPD.
7. The Local Plan Policy H 10 also states that the Council will only approve planning applications that adhere with the Masterplan and the Council's design code. The current Government and the previous Government emphasised the need for housing delivery and that the planning process should not be a barrier for delivering homes. We need therefore to confirm that the Masterplan does not conflict with planning policy so that the Council is in a position to consider planning applications for the site.
8. It must be stressed that the Masterplan is not a Council document and will change over time, so it is essential we put the correct procedures in place to agree further revisions in a timely fashion.
9. The Council has sought Counsel advice. This external advice has confirmed that in their opinion the Masterplan as drafted is consistent with the Local Plan Policy H 10 and the adopted Design Code SPD.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Cabinet is content that the developers Skerningham Masterplan is consistent with the Local Plan Policy and the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD.
 - (b) Cabinet agrees with the Skerningham Garden Village Masterplan.
 - (c) Any subsequent revisions of the Skerningham Garden Village Masterplan to be returned to Cabinet.

Reason

11. The recommendations are supported as policy H 10 of the Darlington Borough Local Plan requires the Council to agree a comprehensive Masterplan for the Skerningham Garden Village allocation in the Local Plan.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

- i. Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036
- ii. Skerningham Garden Village Design Code September 2023

David Hand: Extension 6294

<p>Council Plan</p>	<p>The Local Plan and supporting documents are integral to the delivery of the Council Plan and its priorities (adopted by Council in July 2024). The development of this Masterplan is required by Policy H10 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The priorities of the Council Plan are:</p> <p>ECONOMY - building a strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.</p> <p>The Local Plan allocates land for employment sufficient to meet the future needs of the borough.</p> <p>HOMES – affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents.</p> <p>Skerningham Garden Village will contribute to meeting the boroughs housing needs, including affordable housing requirements.</p> <p>LIVING WELL – a healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most.</p> <p>The existing Local Plan encourages development to consider health and wellbeing with a requirement for larger developments to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Allowance is also made for older people’s accommodation and sets a requirement for adaptable homes.</p> <p>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.</p> <p>The Local Plan contains a mechanism to secure contributions to education provision and secure sites for new provision in key locations. The Masterplan includes site(s) reserved for future education provision.</p> <p>COMMUNITIES – working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities.</p> <p>The Masterplan will help to deliver a cohesive development at Skerningham. The development will include a new neighbourhood centre with community facilities, including a health hub. Additional local facilities will be located to support the early phases of the development.</p> <p>LOCAL ENVIRONMENT – a well-connected, clean and sustainable borough.</p>
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	The Local Plan contains numerous policies to protect both the natural and built environment. The Masterplan sets out that over 55% of the site will be retained as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land, and the existing Golf Club. The development will also be required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.
Addressing inequalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the Local Plan adoption process.
Tackling Climate Change	The developer Masterplan has considered climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The production of this Masterplan is required by Local Plan Policy H10. It has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Group.
Health and Wellbeing	Subsequent planning applications based on this Masterplan, and over 150 homes, will be required to undertake a Health Impact Assessment.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The Masterplan promotes good design and location of development, which discourages crime.
Wards Affected	Whinfield, Harrowgate Hill, Sadberge and Middleton St George, Heighington and Coniscliffe.
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This Masterplan has been developed and funded by the site developers.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Policy Background

12. Policy H10 of the Darlington Local Plan (2016-2036) allocates Skerningham as a strategic site for the delivery of 4,500 dwellings; with an expectation that 1,650 dwellings will come forward in the plan period. The site is bounded by the River Skerne and Barmpton village to the north, the A167 to the west, Darlington's urban edge and the A66 to the south, and agricultural land to the east. The site is also bisected by the East Coast Mainline (ECML). Rather than being broken into smaller parcels, Skerningham has been allocated as a whole in the Local Plan to ensure that it is planned as a single cohesive sustainable development, fully supported by necessary infrastructure provision and with appropriate mitigation measures, as required, delivered in a coordinated phased manner alongside development.
13. To support this aim, Policy H10 requires that a comprehensive Masterplan, including an infrastructure phasing plan, be prepared in consultation with the community prior to the submission of any planning application for the Skerningham allocation. The Masterplan should inform the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure, including social and community facilities, and phasing of the proposed development. The Masterplan shall be led by the applicant(s) and should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD, a strong understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surrounds and incorporate the key principles for the development as set out in points a to i of Policy H10.
14. Para. 6.10.3 of the Local Plan, part of the supporting text for Policy H10, states that the finalised comprehensive Masterplan needs to be 'agreed with the Council'. Then, to ensure that a cohesive development is delivered at Skerningham, the Council will only approve planning applications that adhere with the comprehensive Masterplan, and the Skerningham Design Code SPD, and deliver the necessary local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities at the appropriate phase of the development identified in the infrastructure phasing plan to support the coordinated provision of infrastructure and housing development.
15. The process for agreeing the comprehensive Masterplan is determined by its status. Regulation 5(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribes the documents which are to be prepared as Local Development Documents. The comprehensive Masterplan does not fall within the scope of the definition of documents to be considered a Local Development Document (either an SPD or LPD). The Masterplan must accord with the Design Code (an SPD) and Policy H10 (part of the Local Plan). It is a document that sits underneath the Local Plan and Design Code SPD. The Masterplan is therefore outside the restrictions in Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 for decisions not to be the sole responsibility of a Council's executive. Nor within the scope of Schedule 1 as a decision not to be the responsibility of a Council's executive.

16. The Council's Constitution sets out the decisions that are required to be taken by the Full Council and the Executive. From the Constitution, Responsibility for Functions: *The Executive (directly or by delegating its powers as described below) has the following functions and responsibilities: - (c) adopting on behalf of the Council any plans or strategies which do not form part of the Policy Framework.* The Constitution defines the Policy Framework - which includes the Development Plan. However, as the Masterplan sits below the Local Plan and Design Code SPD, it will not form part of the Development Plan. This means the Masterplan is outside the Policy Framework for the purpose of the Constitution. As such it can be determined by the Executive or delegated to the appropriate officer.
17. The Skerningham Garden Village Design Code was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council on 28 September 2023. Its preparation was informed through various workshops with the local community and stakeholders and was subject to consultation between 9 September 2022 to 17 October 2022; and 9 December 2022 to 13 January 2023. Since then, the preparation of a comprehensive Masterplan has been underway. The Masterplan has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Skerningham Estates (Theakstons Land) and Banks Property, the two companies with the largest amount of land interest in the area. Banks Property is the lead developer for the land on the western part of the allocation, which includes land adjacent to the A167 and west of the ECML. Skerningham Estates Ltd is the lead developer for the land on the east of the ECML. The finalised version of the Masterplan is attached at Appendix 1.
18. As required by Policy H10, the draft Masterplan went through a consultation exercise running from 30 October to 30 November 2023. A full statement of community involvement, detailing the developer's consultation process, is attached at Appendix 2.
19. In summary, approximately 5,200 leaflets were distributed to the homes and businesses near the site between 25th and 30th October 2023 to advertise the consultation. The leaflets signposted respondents to a consultation website which included general background information about the site and the proposals along with a copy of the draft Masterplan which could be downloaded. It also included an inbuilt questionnaire/feedback form. The consultation was also advertised on the Darlington Borough Council website. The website received 1,735 unique visitors, and 215 responses to the online survey were received.
20. The leaflets also advertised a series of daytime drop in consultation events at the Dolphin Centre (in the town centre) and Asda (located on Whinbush Way). The Dolphin Centre was secured as a venue with events taking place during the Autumn school half term week in order to maximise the population demographic. The venue at Asda was selected as an accessible location closer to the Skerningham site. The format of the events comprised a 'drop-in' style of consultation with display boards containing information on the proposals, which generally followed the structure of information on the consultation website. Paper copies of the questionnaire form, consistent with the survey questionnaire on the website, were available at the events, along with return boxes.

21. In response to initial feedback received during the first week of events, two additional consultation events were arranged at Whessoe Parish Hall, on Monday 13 November 2023 (5pm until 8pm) and Wednesday 15 November 2023 (5pm until 8pm). The two final sessions occurred during evening hours. Whessoe Parish Hall also provided an additional venue that was located close to the site.
22. Over the course of the consultation events, over 300 people attended the drop-in sessions. Attendance levels varied among the events with the majority of visitors attending the events held at Asda. By comparison, a relatively low number of people attended the events held at Whessoe Parish Hall. Questionnaire forms were also available to complete at each of the drop-in events. 27 Completed response forms were received at the Asda events; 19 at the Dolphin Centre events; and five at the Whessoe Parish Hall events.
23. The Statement of Community Involvement attached at Appendix 2 provides details of the comments received during the consultation, and the developer’s response to those comments. A schedule of changes also sets out how the Masterplan has been amended in response to feedback.
24. Policy H10 (a-i) sets a series of principles the comprehensive Masterplan is required to incorporate. The following table summarises the compliance of the comprehensive Masterplan with these principles. It should be noted that the principles cover all development at Skerningham, including subsequent planning applications, and therefore not every element of the principles is applicable to the current comprehensive Masterplan.

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
A	A mix of housing types, tenures and sizes, including 20% affordable housing and self/custom build housing, informed by up-to-date evidence of the housing needs of the Borough and Policies H 4 and H 5, with higher densities being incorporated close to public transport routes and neighbourhood centres.	Most of these issues will only be determined at application stage. Higher densities will be delivered in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Centre and other Local Community Facilities; and around other key sustainable transport infrastructure. Development will be of a lower density around the edges and more sensitive areas of the development. Density will vary from 45+ dwellings per hectare in high density areas, to 25-35 dwellings per hectare in low density areas.	
B	A centrally located and well connected neighbourhood centre providing local community facilities including a health hub for GPs and Dentists, clustered with other facilities and services to meet the day to day needs of residents, education, employment opportunities, retail and food	The development will include a centrally located and well connected Neighbourhood Centre providing facilities which could include a health care facilities (GPs /Dentists), education, retail, food and drink facilities, consistent with Policy H 10 (part b). It is also anticipated that there will be employment opportunities at the Neighbourhood	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	and drink (excluding hot food takeaways) facilities. These facilities should be of a scale and type proportionate to the nature of the development and shall be delivered in accordance with the infrastructure phasing plan.	<p>Centre. Pg. 23 of the Masterplan states '<i>The Neighbourhood Centre will include a Health Hub to accommodate GPs and Dentists</i>'.</p> <p>To achieve timely delivery of the social infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Centre, the phasing of the development east of the ECML has been planned progress from the parcels adjacent to Barmpton Lane west towards the central area of the allocation where the Neighbourhood Centre will be located.</p>	
C	Other local community facilities to serve residential areas as required, closely related to public transport, walking and cycling facilities, and shall be delivered in accordance with the infrastructure phasing plan.	The Masterplan includes proposed locations for Local Community Facilities across the site. Consistent with Figure 6.2 in the local plan, this includes a location to the west of the ECML, and in the development cell to the east of Barmpton Lane. Both these centres are phased to come forward as part of Phase 1 in order to establish community facilities as early of possible.	
D	Two primary schools, associated nursery provision (a total of 5.6 hectares) and a reserved space for a secondary school (5 hectares), with the first primary school being delivered on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline before the occupation of the 450th dwelling on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline subject to available capacity within existing or other newly created local schools (see Policy IN 10) and the phasing requirements established in the infrastructure phasing plan. The timescales for the delivery of the additional primary school and secondary school would be identified in the infrastructure	<p>The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings respectively.</p> <p>A development of up to 3,700 dwellings overall equates to a need for 740 primary school places and 444 secondary school places. As the development will take around 25 years to complete, there is a need to keep the education requirement from the development under review.</p> <p>Within the current plan period, 1,450 dwellings are projected to be delivered in the period to 2036. This equates to a need for 290 primary school places and 174 secondary school places.</p>	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	<p>phasing plan and/or through the review of infrastructure requirements prior to the occupation of the 1,650th dwelling where the education requirements and capacity levels will be considered.</p>	<p>It has been confirmed the latest pupil projections data indicates that there are sufficient surplus places at both primary and secondary school levels to accommodate pupils that would be generated by the delivery of 1,450 dwellings in the plan period.</p> <p>The Council's preference is to utilise the surplus of pupil places in the nearby existing schools before commencing construction of a new school. Therefore, the need for the first primary school is not required before the occupation of the 450th dwellings and the educational need arising from the development will be kept under review.</p> <p>The Masterplan includes land reserved for the provision of a primary school and secondary school which would come forward subject to further review.</p>	
E	<p>An integrated transport network focused on sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling with strong links to adjoining communities, employment locations and Darlington town centre, shall be delivered in accordance with the infrastructure phasing plan.</p>	<p>The Design Code for the site encourages the creation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. The Masterplan includes the provision of a centrally located neighbourhood centre to support new development. It also includes the provision of new school(s), a health hub and smaller retail/local community facilities.</p> <p>Alongside the provision of facilities, access routes have been considered to maximise walking, cycling and public transport links. Active Travel Corridors are identified which will include segregated footpaths and cycle paths (traffic-free routes) which have been routed to follow the desire lines towards the key destinations within the site.</p> <p>The site benefits from existing public transport services. Development in</p>	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
		<p>the early phases will be accessible to existing services on the A167 (to the west) and on Whinbush Way (to the east) which provide frequent links to Darlington. Development in Phase 1 (to the east of the allocation) will consider an extension of the existing service (No.10) to Barmpton Lane. The No.10 Service can be extended further in subsequent phases to serve the centrally located neighbourhood centre.</p>	
F	<p>Principal vehicular access points from the A167, A1150 and Barmpton Lane and include appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of development on the local road network. The phased implementation of the highways works and improvements will be linked to appropriate phases of development within the plan period. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following schemes from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, exact details to be identified as part of the comprehensive Masterplan, infrastructure phasing plan and any future planning applications for the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A66/Little Burdon Circulatory Upgrade ii. A1150/ Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements iii. A167/Burtree Lane Junction Improvements iv. Barmpton Lane upgrade works including its junction with Whinbush Way 	<p>The Masterplan is based on principal access points from the A167, A1150 and Barmpton Lane, and therefore is consistent with policy.</p> <p>The requirement for contributions for schemes set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is set out in the Infrastructure Phasing Plan in Section 7 of the Comprehensive Masterplan. Further details will be refined as part of the planning application process.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Prior to the occupation of the first dwelling on land on the western part of the allocation (between the A167 and the East Coast 	<p>The Comprehensive Masterplan sets out that the section of the local distributor road between the A167 and the primary development access point shall be delivered in Phase 1.</p>	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	Mainline) the section of the local distributor road between the A167 and the primary development access point shall be delivered.	Delivery prior to occupation of the first dwelling on land on the western part of the allocation will be secured by planning condition on the relevant application(s).	
	ii. Prior to the completion of the development on the western part of the allocation (between the A167 and East Coast Mainline) the remaining section of the local distributor road to the East Coast Mainline shall be delivered.	The Comprehensive Masterplan sets out that the section of the local distributor road between the A167 and East Coast Mainline shall be delivered in Phase 1, prior to the completion of the development on the western part of the allocation.	
	iii. Development of the initial phases of development on the eastern part of the allocation will be accessed via Barmpton Lane and/or Bishopton Lane. Prior to the occupation of between the 200th and 450th dwelling on the eastern part of the allocation the section of the local distributor road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane shall be delivered.	<p>The Comprehensive Masterplan sets out that Phase 1 of development on the eastern part of the allocation will be accessed via Barmpton Lane.</p> <p>The local distributor road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane is set out as part of Phase 2 (2031 - 2033). Delivery prior to occupation of the of between the 200th and 450th dwelling on the eastern part of the allocation will be secured by planning condition on the relevant application(s).</p>	
	iv. Prior to the occupation of between the 900th and 1500th dwelling the local distributor road between the A167 and the A1150 (including the bridge crossing of the East Coast Mainline) shall be completed in its entirety.	Completion of Local Distributor Road in its entirety is scheduled for Phase 4 of the Comprehensive Masterplan. Delivery prior to the occupation of 1,500th dwelling will be secured by condition of the relevant application(s).	
H	Other necessary infrastructure as required by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and identified at the time of submitting a planning application.	Not Applicable at this Stage. The Infrastructure Phasing Plan does set out necessary infrastructure for each phase, but compliance with this requirement of Policy H10 can only be	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
		fully examined at planning application stage.	
I	A network of green and blue infrastructure, the phasing of which is to be agreed with the Council as part of the infrastructure phasing plan, that:	The Masterplan sets out a strategy for green and blue infrastructure at Skerningham which is consistent with the Masterplan Framework and the Design Code.	
	i. Retains and enhances the network of safe, attractive and accessible public rights of way, footpaths and cycle routes across the site.	Retaining and enhancing the existing network has formed the basis of the Sustainable Travel Plan (Pg. 12). As well as providing links to the woodland and other green spaces in the northern part of the site (which will remain as a destination for new and existing members of the local community), their Masterplan takes opportunities to locate the supporting social infrastructure along these routes.	
	ii. Protects and enhances the River Skerne, its valley setting (see Policy ENV 7), and the green corridors (see Policy ENV3). Where infrastructure crosses these corridors mitigation measures should be provided.	The Masterplan follows the principles set out in the Design Code of restricting development in the central section of the site to south of the distributor road – thereby preserving the Skerne Valley. Land to the north of the site (close to the River Skerne) will be dedicated for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).	
	iii. Delivers a net gain in the area of publicly accessible community woodland on the site.	To support the early phases of the development, land close to Skerningham Manor will be used to deliver BNG. This area of land lies close to Skerningham Woods and is therefore a logical space to introduce further new planting and areas dedicated to nature. The exact net gain in community woodland will be determined in planning applications, but a clear commitment to planting additional woodland is shown on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan on pg.10.	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	<p>iv. Provides a pattern of well-integrated and inter-connected green spaces (along with provision for their long-term maintenance) across the site providing for the green infrastructure needs of the local community, including wildlife friendly natural spaces, sport and recreation facilities and allotments in accordance with Policies ENV 4, ENV 5 and ENV 9.</p>	<p>The development at Skerningham will be landscape-led, and it will adopt an approach that respects the topography, views and the potential for the enhancement to green and blue infrastructure.</p> <p>Around 55% of the site area will be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land and the existing Golf Club.</p> <p>Skerningham Woods to the north of the site will be retained and enhanced, the development will therefore focus on the enhancement of this area with further planting and creation of new public routes. Green Infrastructure will include existing and new areas of natural/semi-natural open space, managed areas of green space, playing fields (associated with schools and potentially community use agreements) and public areas of open space.</p> <p>It is proposed that the lead developers would be responsible for the delivery of initial works including the landscaping; thereafter Skerningham management companies would be established to guide the stewardship and maintenance of the Skerningham site. As part of such arrangements, residents and local community groups would input into the longer-term management and care regime.</p>	
	<p>v. Protects the amenity of existing residential properties (see Policy DC 3).</p>	<p>Not Applicable at this Stage. Amenity issues under Policy DC3 will be considered at Planning Application stage.</p>	
	<p>vi. Wherever possible retains and enhances hedgerows</p>	<p>Whilst some tree removal will be necessary in order to deliver the Local</p>	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	and trees that contribute to landscape character.	Distributor Road, the Green Infrastructure strategy will also ensure a net increase in the tree planting on the site. Consideration of individual trees and hedgerows will be undertaken at the planning application stage.	
vii.	Provides for the potential relocation of Darlington Golf Club to a suitable location within the allocation boundary.	Not applicable. It is now proposed that the golf course will remain in situ and that Skertingham will be delivered in line with Figure 6.2 of the Local Plan.	
viii.	Mitigates the impact on biodiversity (see Policy ENV 7).	<p>The development will achieve a net gain for biodiversity consistent with the requirements of Policy ENV 8 of the Local Plan and the Design Code. This will be delivered on a phased basis and each planning application should demonstrate how this will be achieved.</p> <p>On land to the west of the ECML, land to the north of the site (close to the River Skerne) would be dedicated for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). There could also be further areas available adjacent to the ECML, as part of the SuDS and in other green linkages between the development cells.</p> <p>On land to the east of the ECML, there is a significant area of land to the north of the Local Distributor Road that will remain as 'green' space. To support the early phases of the development, land close to Skertingham Manor will be used to deliver BNG.</p>	
ix.	Retains the openness and separation of the rural gaps between Darlington and the villages of Great Burdon and Barmpton (see Policy ENV3).	The comprehensive masterplan retains the rural gaps between Darlington and the villages of Great Burdon and Barmpton.	

	Principle of Development	Masterplan Assessment	Compliance
	x. Incorporates sustainable drainage systems.	A range of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be integrated into the development, providing stormwater filtering and attenuation, reduction of flood risk, improvements to water quality and increase to biodiversity. A Drainage Plan is located on Pg. 22 of the Comprehensive Masterplan.	

25. It is also required by Policy H10 that the Masterplan is based on the design approach and principles established in the Council’s Design Code. It should be noted that the Masterplan cannot be assessed using the Design Quality Coding Checklist contained in the Design Code SPD, as that checklist is written to assess planning applications.
26. Nevertheless, the Design Code SPD has been heavily integrated into the Masterplan. This includes, but is not limited to:
- (a) Adopting the same vision and objectives as set out in the Design Code SPD [Pg. 6].
 - (b) Ensuring no development east of the ECML occurs to the north of the distributor road [Pg. 9].
 - (c) Locating Local Community Facilities so as to achieve 20-minute neighbourhoods [Pg. 14].
 - (d) Ensuring the density of development increases towards the centrally located Neighbourhood Centre [Pg. 14].
 - (e) Committing to produce Parcel Codes for each development parcel to demonstrate how the vision and objectives, and other principles in the Design Code, can be achieved [Pg. 15].
 - (f) Adopting the same Character Areas as set out in the Design Code SPD [Pg. 16].
 - (g) Adopting the same approach to architectural style as set out in the Design Code SPD [Pg. 17].
 - (h) Integrating enhancements to the landscape north of the distributor road into the phasing [Pg. 27 & Infrastructure Phasing Plan].
 - (i) Detailing Skerningham Garden Village will provide high-speed broadband [Pg. 29].
27. Considering the document as a whole, officers are satisfied that the Masterplan has been based on the design approach and principles established in the Council’s Design Code.

28. In conclusion, it is considered that the Developer's Masterplan is consistent with Local Plan Policy H 10, and is based on the adopted Design Code SPD, and therefore that there are no reasons why the document cannot be agreed.

Legal Implications

29. External legal advice is that the Masterplan is in line with the Local Plan and Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

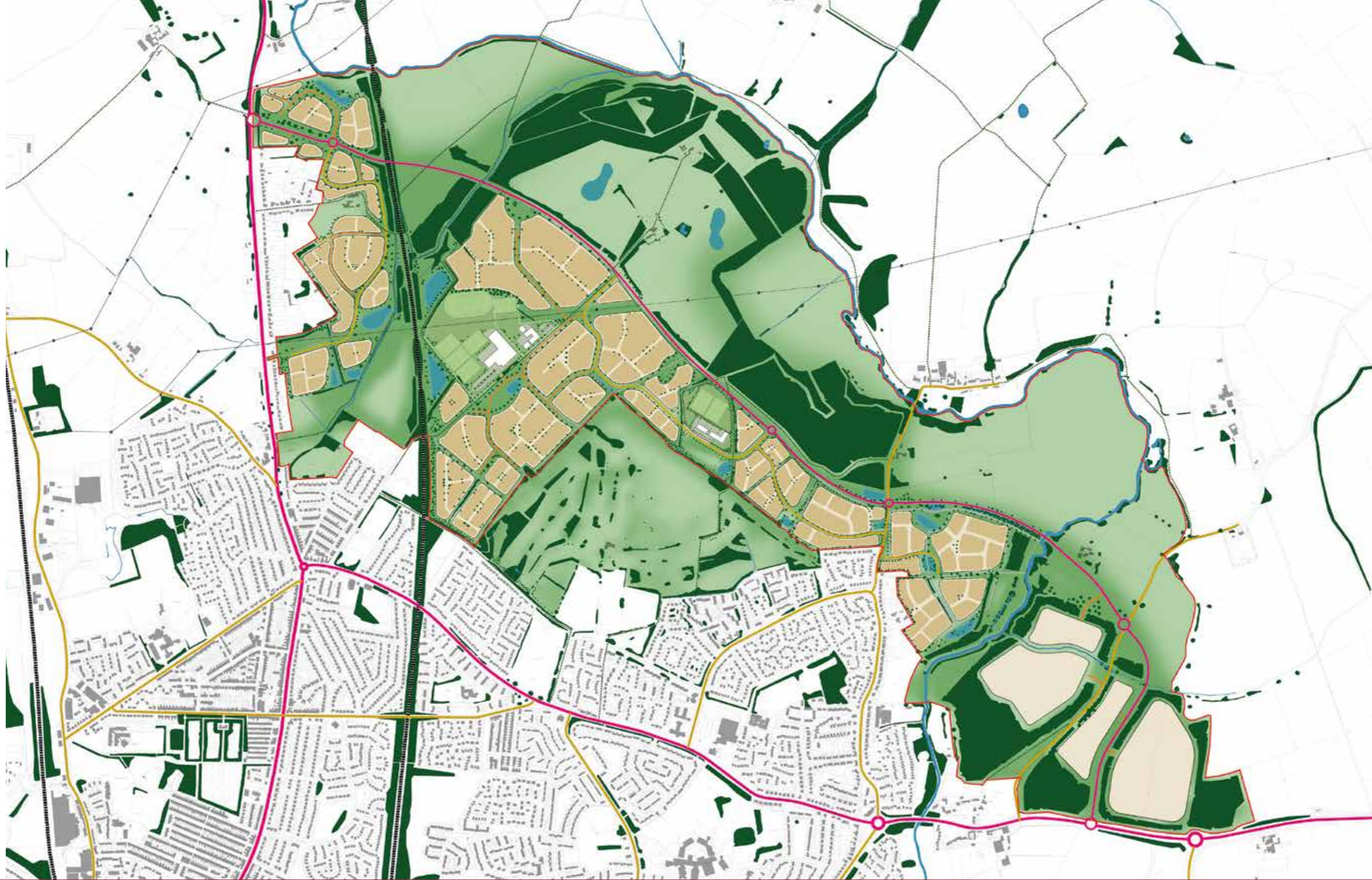
30. Contained within the Masterplan document.

Consultation

31. Consultation has been carried out by developers; there is no requirement for a Council consultation as this is not a Council document.

Outcome of Consultation

32. See Appendix 2.



Skerningham
ESTATES Ltd

BANKSProperty
development with care

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1 | Introduction and Background

“A comprehensive masterplan including an infrastructure phasing plan shall be prepared in consultation with the community prior to the submission of any planning application relating to this site, that informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development. The masterplan shall be led by the applicant(s) and should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Council’s Design Code, a strong understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surrounds and incorporate the key principles for the development as set out in points a to i below. To ensure that a cohesive development is delivered at Skertingham, the Council will only approve planning applications that adhere with the comprehensive masterplan and the Council’s design code and deliver the necessary local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities at the appropriate phase of the development identified in the infrastructure phasing plan to support the coordinated provision of infrastructure and housing development.”

(Extract from Policy H 10, Darlington Local Plan, February 2022)

This Masterplan has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf Skertingham Estates Ltd and Banks Property. It provides a Comprehensive Masterplan and Infrastructure Phasing Plan for the proposed development at Skertingham Garden Village (Skertingham).

Policy H 10 Skertingham – Site Allocation (Strategic Policy), the policy most relevant to the allocation of the site, makes clear that a Comprehensive Masterplan including an Infrastructure Phasing Plan should be prepared by the applicant(s) prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site. It also states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code (which is prepared or led by Darlington Borough Council (“the Council”)).

The preparation of the Design Code, undertaken by independent consultants appointed by the Council, commenced in Spring 2022. It has been informed through various workshops with the local community and stakeholders and was subject to consultation between 9 September 2022 to 17 October 2022; and 9 December 2022 to 13 January 2023. The Design Code was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council on 28 September 2023. Representatives from the lead developers attended the Design Code workshops and the feedback gained also informed the preparation of the Comprehensive Masterplan.

The preparation of this Masterplan document follows the finalisation of the Design Code. It has been prepared by the lead site promoters Skertingham Estates Ltd and Banks Property.

A draft version of the Masterplan was made available for the community to view and comment on (from 30 October 2023 to 30 November 2023). Participants will be able to provide comments via the built-in survey and through questionnaire surveys available at drop in events.

A statement of community Involvement has been prepared to detail the consultation undertaken and outline where changes have been made to the Masterplan.

The delivery of Skertingham will extend beyond the current Local Plan period (2036). Whilst the Masterplan has identified the likely infrastructure requirements, given the nature and timescales for the build of the development, it should be kept under review.

The document is structured as follows:

- Site Context
- Vision and Objectives
- Masterplan Framework
- Design and Character
- Infrastructure Requirements
- Infrastructure Phasing Plan
- Conclusion



2 | Site Context

The Skerningham allocation is a 487 hectare site located to the north of Darlington. It will adjoin the existing communities at Beaumont Hill, Whinfield and Great Burdon. Barmpton Village is also located close to the north eastern edge of the site.

The site is bordered by the River Skerne and Barmpton Village to the north, the A167 to the west, Darlington's urban edge and the A66 to the south and agricultural land to the east. The site is also bisected by the East Coast Mainline.

The A167 and A1150 are the nearest A Roads to the development, which provide links to the town and wider locality. Access will also be gained from Barmpton Lane and Bishopston Lane. The development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on other nearby roads and junctions, including Whinbush Way, Burtree Lane and Thompson Street East. The A1(M) (Junction 59) and the A66 are the nearest sections of the Strategic Road Network and have been assessed in consultation with National Highways.

The site is allocated for the delivery of up to 4,500 dwellings, to be delivered with supporting infrastructure and facilities (as detailed in Policy H 10 a to i). However, as a result of the Golf Club's decision to remain, the capacity of Skerningham is around 3,700 new homes.

Banks Property is the lead developer for the land on the western part of the allocation, which includes land adjacent to the A167 and west of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies the delivery of 600 dwellings and local retail/ community facilities on this part of the allocation during the plan period.

Skerningham Estates Ltd is the lead developer for the land on the east of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies 1,050 dwellings to be delivered during the plan period with initial phases located on land adjoining Barmpton Lane.

Paragraph 6.10.6 in the Local Plan makes clear that these numbers are not regarded as the maximum number of homes that the site could deliver during the plan period.

The site is also a designated Garden Village following the announcement by the Government on 27 June 2019, with a key objective being to boost the delivery of new homes.

In this context, the delivery of the site could be accelerated during the plan period.



Figure 2.1 Site Location

3 | Vision and Objectives

The Vision for Skerningham is:

“To create a highly liveable and sustainable community that prioritises the people that live there; their health and well-being and overall quality of life.”

This vision is established in the Design Code which also sets out the three key objectives to achieve this vision for Skerningham.

Objectives

Healthy Living

A strong health and well-being focus, secured by nature led design, and a 20 minute walkable neighbourhood design philosophy in order to encourage walking and cycling.

This objective follows Darlington’s selection as an NHS England Healthy New Town – one of 10 sites in the country chosen to take forward principles to improve health and wellbeing.

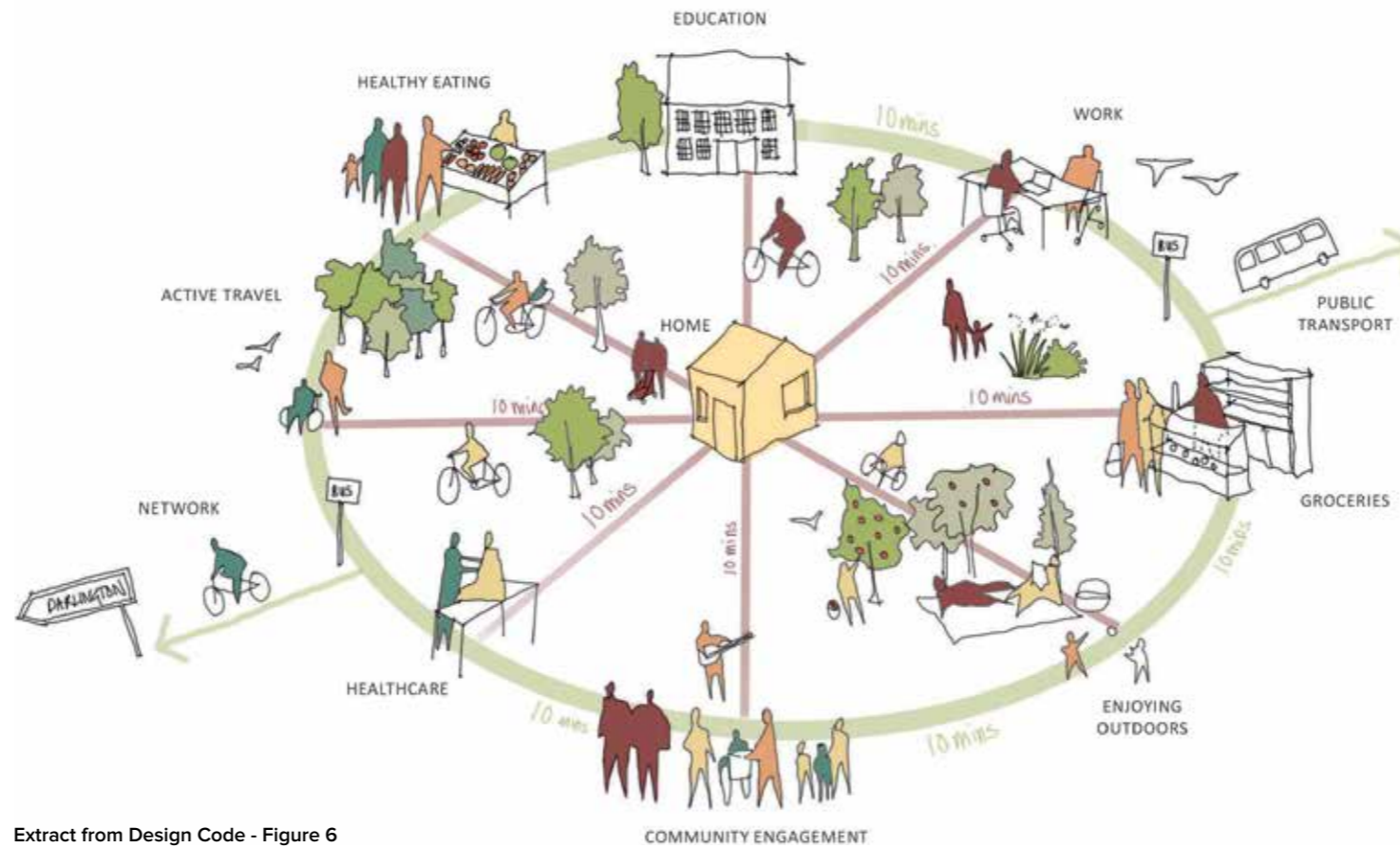
Innovation

Development will embrace the latest technologies in relation to energy, climate change objectives and digital communication. As the build out of the development will take place over an extended period of time, it will continue to adapt to the rapidly changing technology to meet this objective.

Sense of Place

Skerningham will have a strong identity and sense of place. Architecturally, the layout and appearance of development should be distinctive to Darlington.

It is also recognised from the consultation process that the local communities place high value on access to nature and wildlife and spaces for social interaction. Existing Public Rights of Way will be retained and enhanced along with the provision of new routes towards the Community Woodland to the north of the site.



Extract from Design Code - Figure 6



Illustrative Visual of Open Space

Partnership Working

Following the designation of the site as a Garden Village, Homes England has retained a strong interest in the development and have contributed to the preparation of this document.

Prior to finalising the document, an updated version of the Comprehensive Masterplan was shared with the Council, Homes England and other members of the Skerningham Garden Village Board.

The delivery of the site infrastructure has been discussed with the relevant departments within the Council. Network Rail has also been involved in relation to the proposed crossing over the East Coast Mainline.

The lead developers for the site have worked proactively with the Council, Homes England and the local community, through various engagement events over the years, in order to listen to and understand the concerns and suggestions for the development. This has informed the vision and objectives for the development at Skerningham.

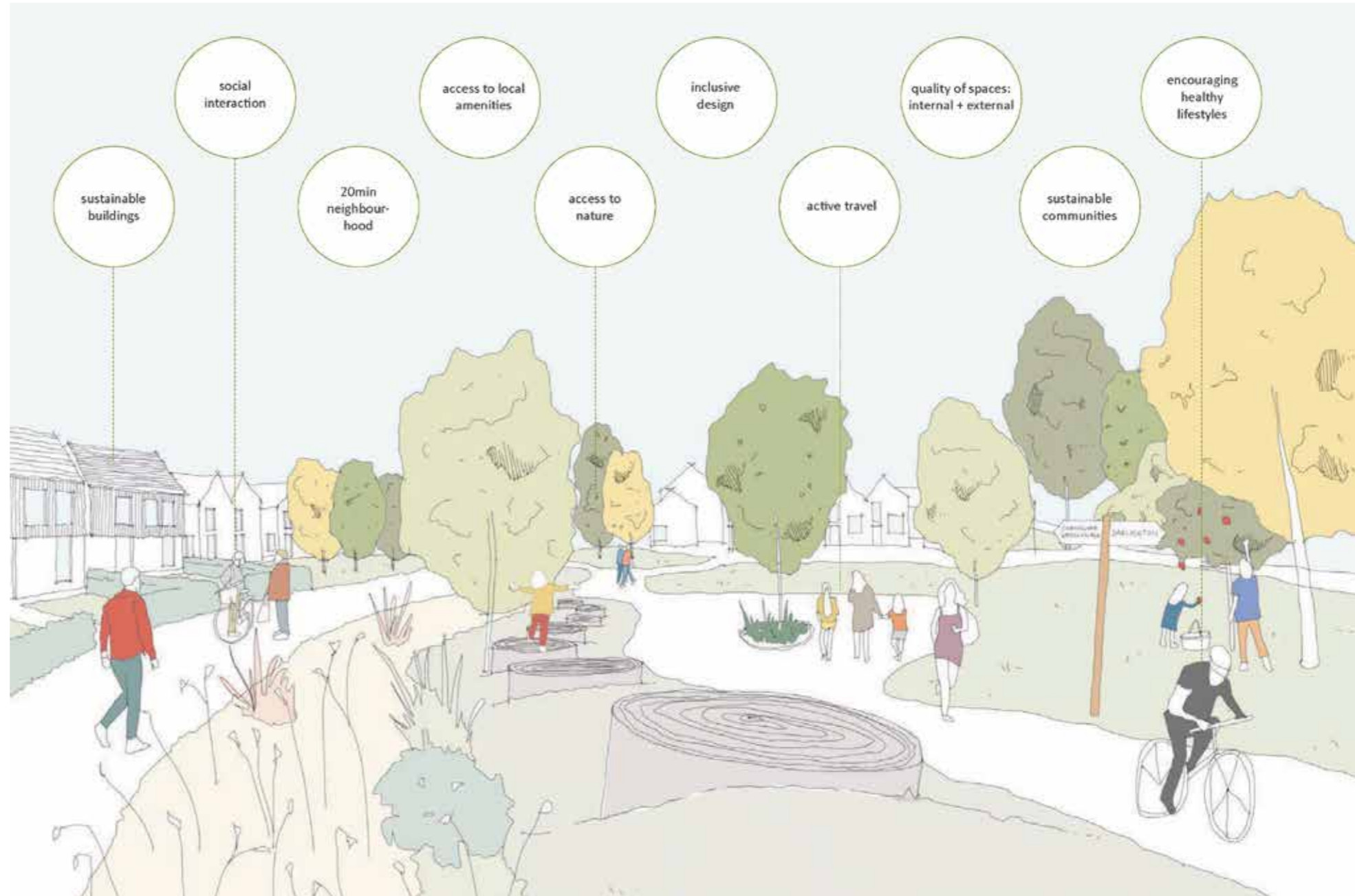


Image from Design Code - Figure 7

4 | Masterplan Framework

The Local Plan includes an Illustrative Masterplan Framework for the site which includes “key principles for the development of the Skerningham site” and “broad locations for land uses and facilities”.

There are two versions of the Illustrative Masterplan Framework at Figures 4.1 and 4.2 which account for scenarios where Darlington Golf Club is relocated within the site and where it remains in its current location.

In January 2023 Darlington Golf Club announced that the Golf Club will remain in its current location. Accordingly, the Masterplan Framework in Figure 4.2 is the likely scenario moving forward and the Masterplan for the development has progressed on this basis. This has an impact on the capacity of the site which would mean a total development in the region of 3,700 dwellings. This is noted at paragraph 128 of the Inspector’s Report on the examination of the Darlington Borough Local Plan. However, there are some land parcels not used by the Golf Club, which may be available for development.

Development parcels are shown in the south east area of the allocation on both options of the Masterplan framework, between the River Skerne and the A1150. During the promotion of the site through the Local Plan making process, employment uses were shown on these parcels, as recognised in paragraph 6.10.9 of the Local Plan. The Design Code makes provisions for either employment uses or residential development, to be assessed as part of a review of the Local Plan. In the event that the Local Plan review identifies residential development on these parcels, the Local Plan review would consider the capacity of the south east area, taking into account existing and planned infrastructure.

Both Masterplan Framework options show the broad locations for development parcels, the route of the Local Distributor Road, areas of green infrastructure and the location of the Neighbourhood Centre, schools and other community facilities.

The Masterplan (Figure 4.3 on page 9) presents the Comprehensive Masterplan for the site and the remaining pages in this section present the key parameters for the development.

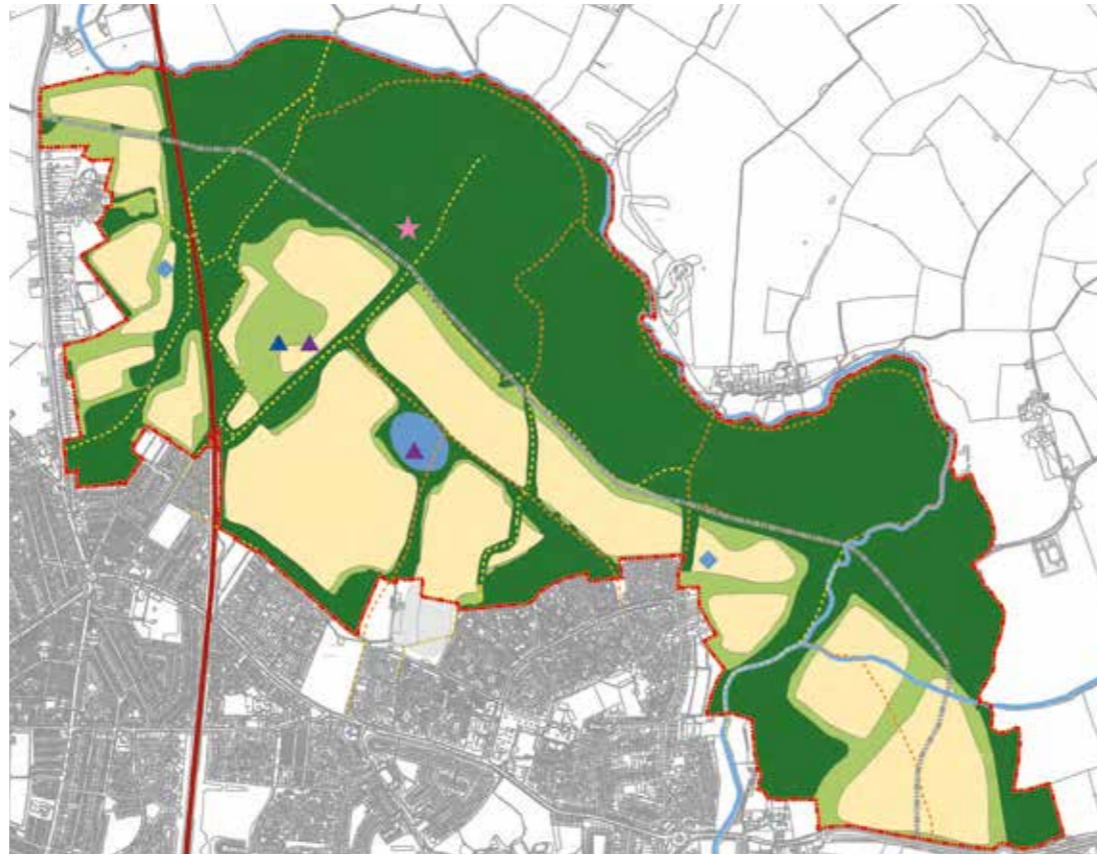


Figure 4.1 Skerningham Masterplan Framework
(Extract from Adopted Darlington Local Plan February 2022 Figure 6.1)



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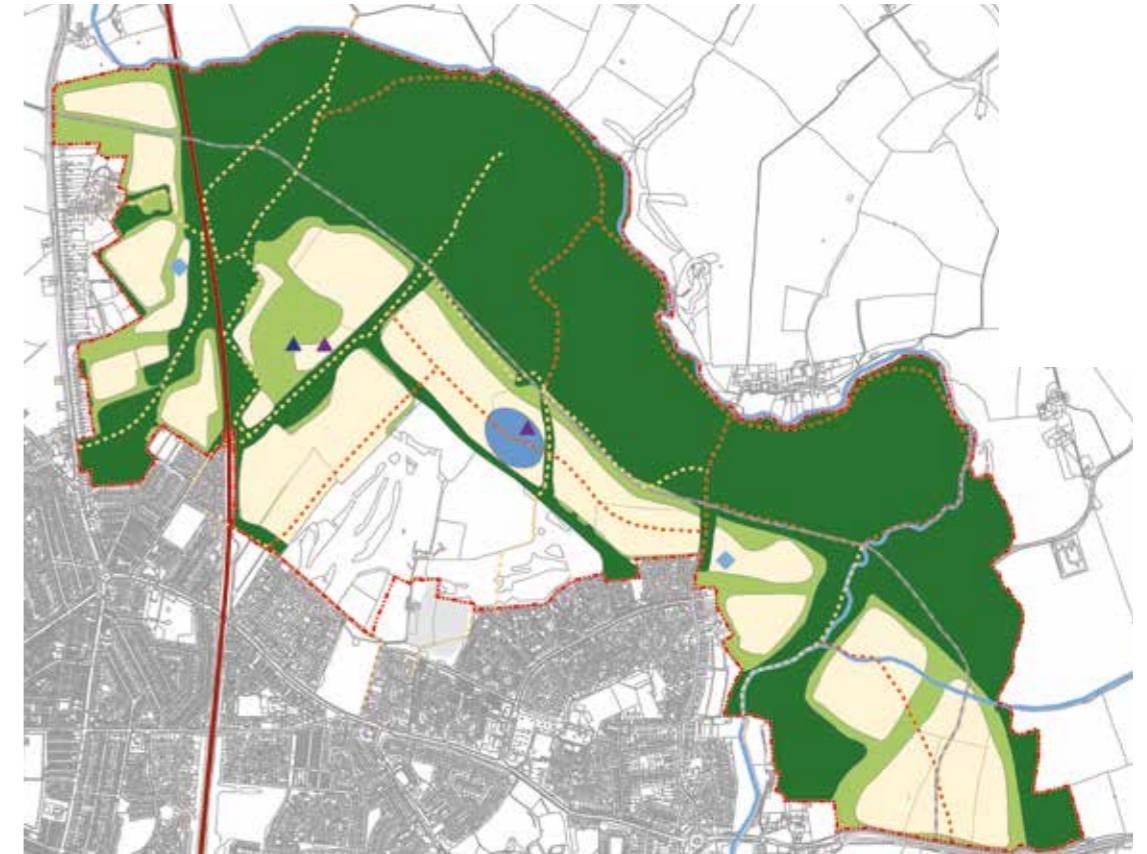


Figure 4.2 Skerningham Masterplan Framework with Darlington Golf Club Remaining insitu
(Extract from Adopted Darlington Local Plan February 2022 Figure 6.2)



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Comprehensive Masterplan

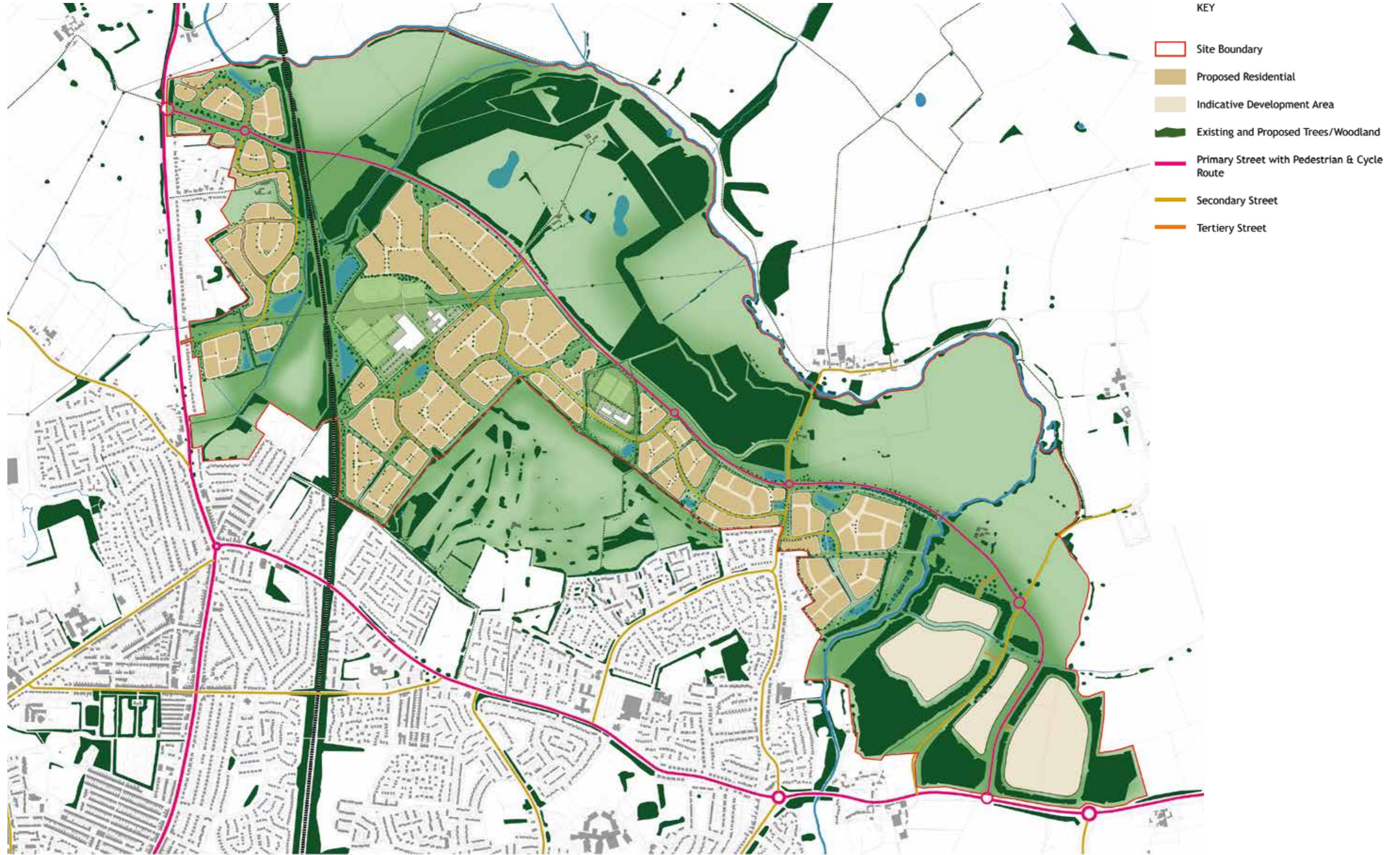


Figure 4.3 Comprehensive Masterplan

4 | Masterplan Framework

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure

The development at Skerningham will be genuinely landscape-led, and it will adopt an approach that respects the topography, views and the potential for the enhancement to green and blue infrastructure (see Figure 4.4).

Around 55% of the site area will be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land and the existing Golf Club (consistent with Local Plan paragraph 6.10.12). As the Golf Club will remain in its current location, Skerningham Woods to the north of the site will remain as it is and an asset for wildlife and the community. Whilst some tree removal will be necessary in order to deliver the Local Distributor Road, its route is broadly consistent with the one shown in the Masterplan Frameworks in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 (shown on page 6 of this document) of the adopted Local Plan tested through an independent Examination in Public. The Green Infrastructure strategy will also ensure a net increase in the tree planting on the site.

Skerningham Woods to the north of the site will be retained and enhanced. The feedback from the local community demonstrates that it is an important local asset and the development will therefore focus on the enhancement of this area with further planting and creation of new public routes. As shown opposite, other Green Infrastructure will include existing and new areas of natural/semi-natural open space, managed areas of green space, playing fields (associated with schools and potentially community use agreements) and public areas of open space. Other areas will also be retained for agricultural use.

Existing public rights of way will be retained and enhanced, where practicable, which provide connections towards the retained areas of Green Infrastructure in the northern part of the site. These routes will be complemented with new active travel routes to provide connectivity between new homes and social infrastructure green spaces and other destinations.

Using existing routes and, through the creation of additional proposed paths and walkways, the Masterplan includes circular routes of varying distances. These routes are illustratively shown in Figure 4.5, with the longest route shown providing a loop from the southern boundary of the site up to Skerningham Woods (to the north) and via Barmpton Village to the east. Figure 6.9 shows illustrative routes associated with the play space strategy.

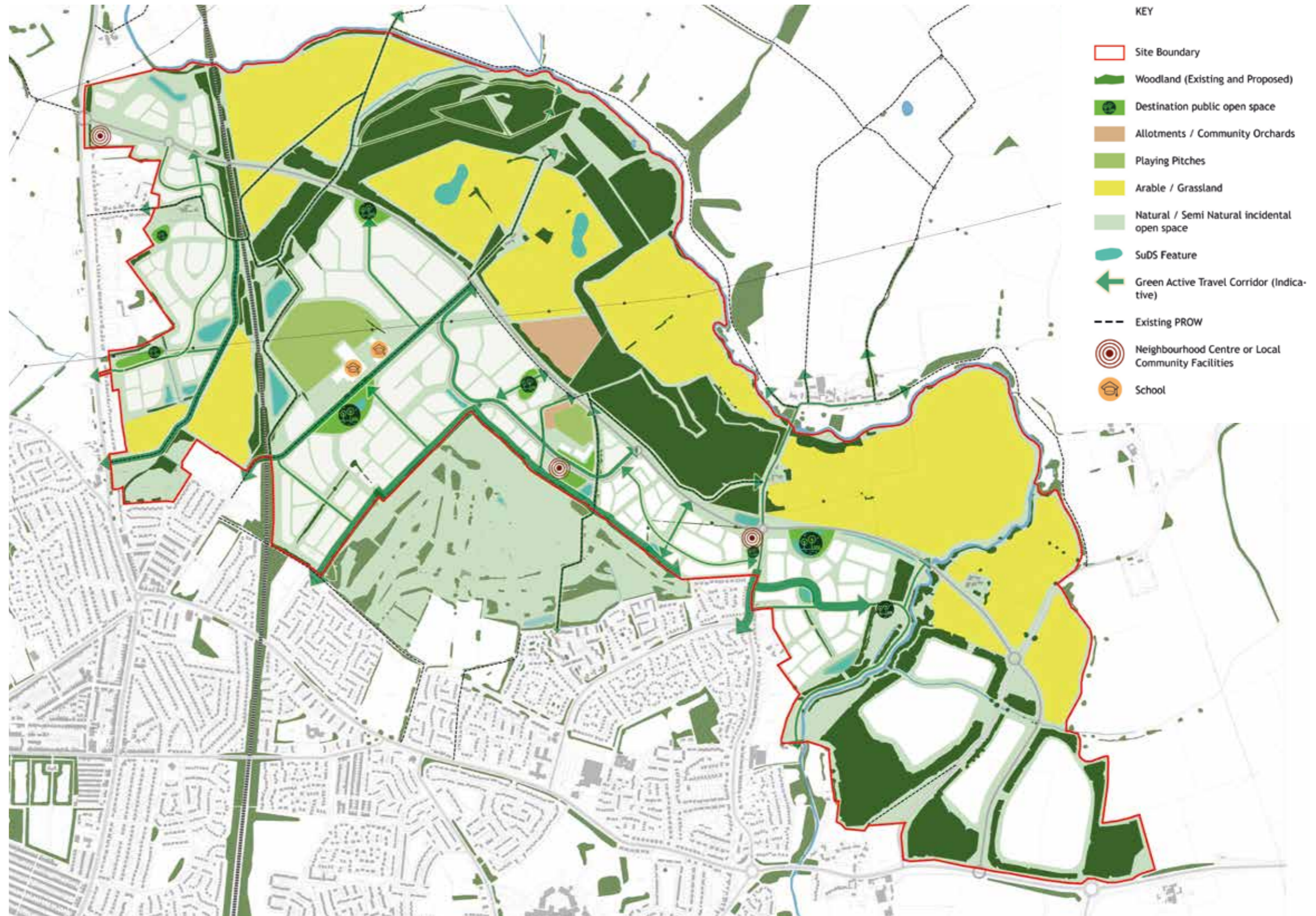


Figure 4.4 Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan

Blue Infrastructure

The River Skerne runs along the northern boundary and through the eastern area of the site. It forms a key asset for nature and wildlife and also the drainage strategy for the development.

A range of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be integrated into the development, providing stormwater filtering and attenuation, reduction of flood risk, improvements to water quality and increase to biodiversity.

Management and Maintenance

The development will include various typologies of open space and the approach to managing and maintaining this space will vary accordingly, based on defined requirements.

Skerningham will include areas where formal management of the site is required, including the areas relating to the drainage infrastructure, dedicated areas for biodiversity net gain and the managed areas identified for public use. In these areas, it is envisaged that the green and blue infrastructure will be maintained by a management company. This will be a formal agreement with the lead developers and will be funded via a service charge to the occupiers on the site.

There are other more informal areas of green space within the site such as Skerningham Woods to the north of the site. There is an opportunity for a longer-term stewardship scheme. Under this arrangement, it is proposed that the lead developers would be responsible for the delivery of initial works including the landscaping; thereafter Skerningham management companies would be established to guide the stewardship and maintenance of the Skerningham site. As part of such arrangements, residents and local community groups would input into the longer-term management and care regime.

It is recognised that there are human graves located within Skerningham Woods, which will continue to be respected.

As part of initiatives to support local food growth, the development is anticipated to provide opportunities in the form of allotments and/or other schemes which follow the Incredible Edible Model, such as community orchards and community grow zones. These provide other opportunities for community management initiatives.

For the areas of the site that are to remain in agricultural use (either during the phased build of the development or in the longer term), they will remain in private ownership (notwithstanding any relevant Public Rights of Way) and will be privately managed.



Illustrative Visual of Open Space

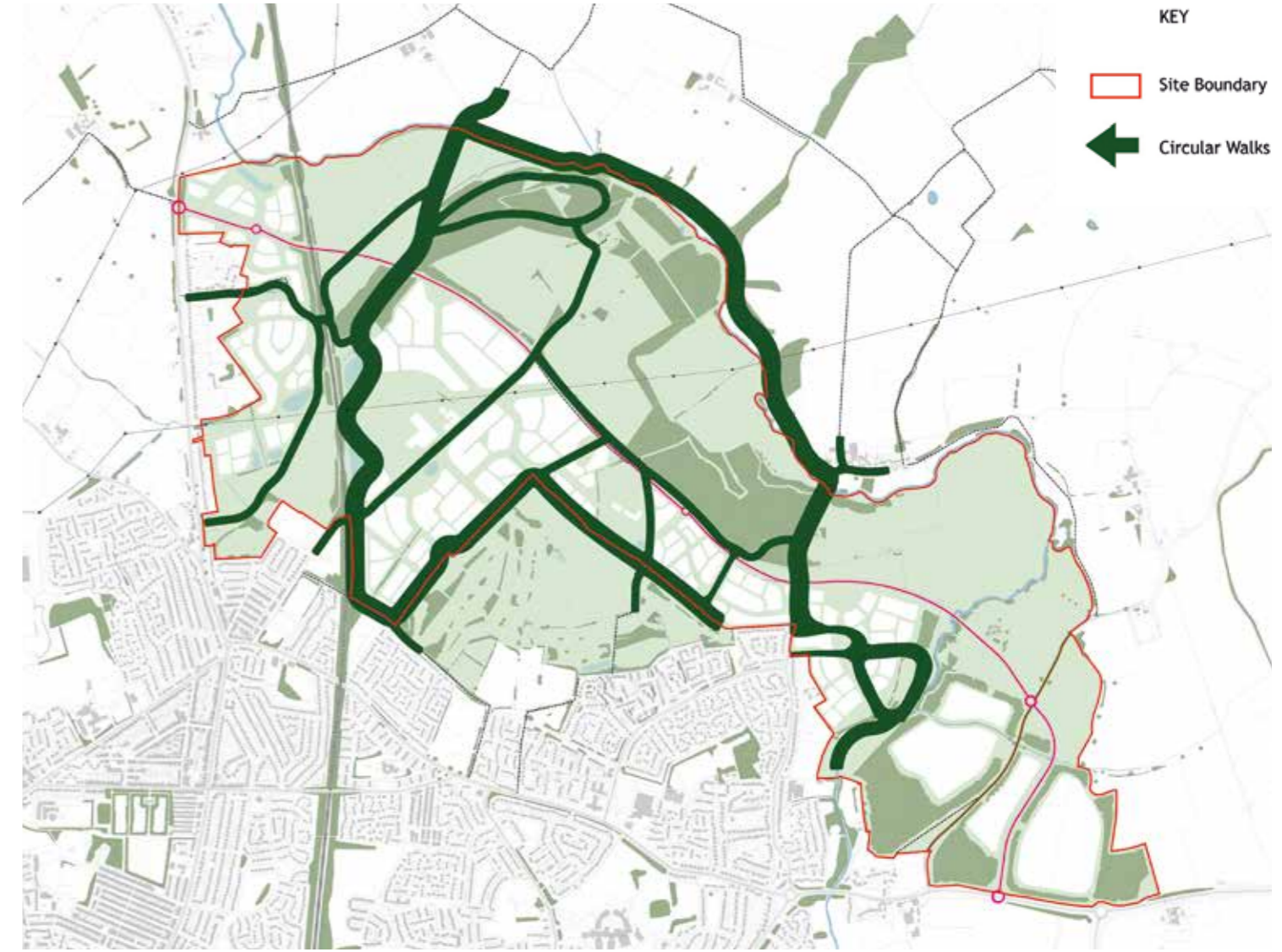


Figure 4.5 Circular Routes Plan

4 | Masterplan Framework

Access and Movement

Sustainable Travel

The development will prioritise sustainable travel as a means of movement through the site. Through the designation of the site as a Garden Village, it has been demonstrated that the site will achieve a sense of place making through the provision of supporting infrastructure alongside the delivery of new homes.

To achieve this, the starting point has been to retain and enhance the existing Public Rights of Way as assets through the site. As well as providing links to the woodland and other green spaces in the northern part of the site (which will remain as a destination for new and existing members of the local community), there is an opportunity to locate the supporting social infrastructure along these routes.

The Design Code builds on this principle further by introducing the concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. Due to the size and shape of the site, it is not possible to deliver all new homes within a 20 minute round trip walking distance from the centrally located neighbourhood centre. However, there is an opportunity to provide local community facilities, such as the provision of convenience store, in other areas of the site.

The development will also maximise opportunities for cycling. Active Travel Corridors are identified which will include segregated footpaths and cycle paths which have been routed to follow the desire lines towards the key destinations within the site. The development will also follow the principles established in the Design Code, which details the specification of paths to be incorporated as part of the road hierarchy. These routes will be designed cognisant of LTN 1/20 guidance.

The site benefits from existing public transport services. Development in the early phases will be accessible to existing services on the A167 (to the west) and on Whinbush Way (to the east) which provide frequent links to Darlington. During the later phases there is an opportunity to either divert or introduce new services into the site and the road infrastructure will be designed to facilitate this.

The development should also look at other initiatives such as the inclusion of Mobility Hubs to support sustainable travel. A Mobility Hub could include a car club, cycle storage and repair hub and/or smart lockers.

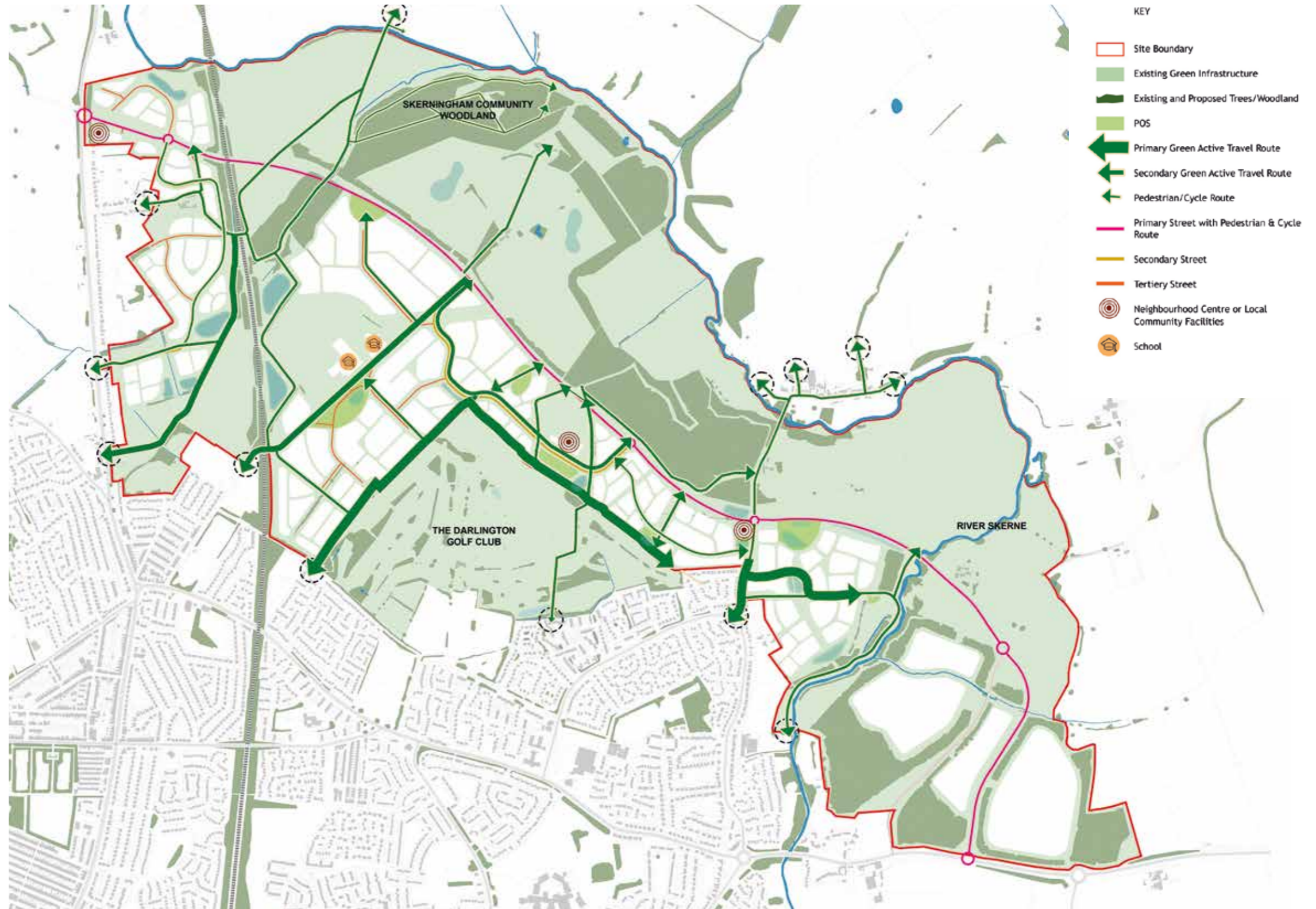


Figure 4.6 Sustainable Travel Plan

Access

The plan opposite shows the principal access points from A167, A1150 and Barmpton Lane (consistent with Policy H 10 part f).

It also shows the key pedestrian and cycle connection points between the site and existing routes.

Local Distributor Road

The illustrative route of the Local Distributor Road is shown opposite. It follows the assessment to determine the most suitable point for the crossing of the East Coast Mainline and it also responds to other constraints across the site.

It also clarifies the locations of the proposed junctions, including those with Barmpton Lane, Bishopton Lane and other access points to the development cells, following discussions with the Council’s Highways team.

The Local Distributor Road will provide a connection between the A167 (to the west) and the A1150 (to the east) and will include a crossing of the East Coast Mainline and a new junction on to the A1150. Policy H 10 (part g) states that it will be achieved through the following:

- i. The section of the road between the A167 and the primary development access point shall be delivered prior to the occupation of the first dwelling on land on the western part of the allocation.
- ii. The remaining section of the road to the East Coast Mainline shall be delivered prior to the completion of the development on the western part of the allocation.
- iii. The section of the road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane shall be delivered prior to the occupation of between the 200th and 450th dwelling on the eastern part of the allocation.
- iv. The road shall be completed in its entirety (including the bridge crossing of the East Coast Mainline) prior to the occupation of between the 900th and 1500th dwelling.
- v. Precise details of the route of the Local Distributor Road will be determined at the planning application stage and a Development Consent Order as applicable.

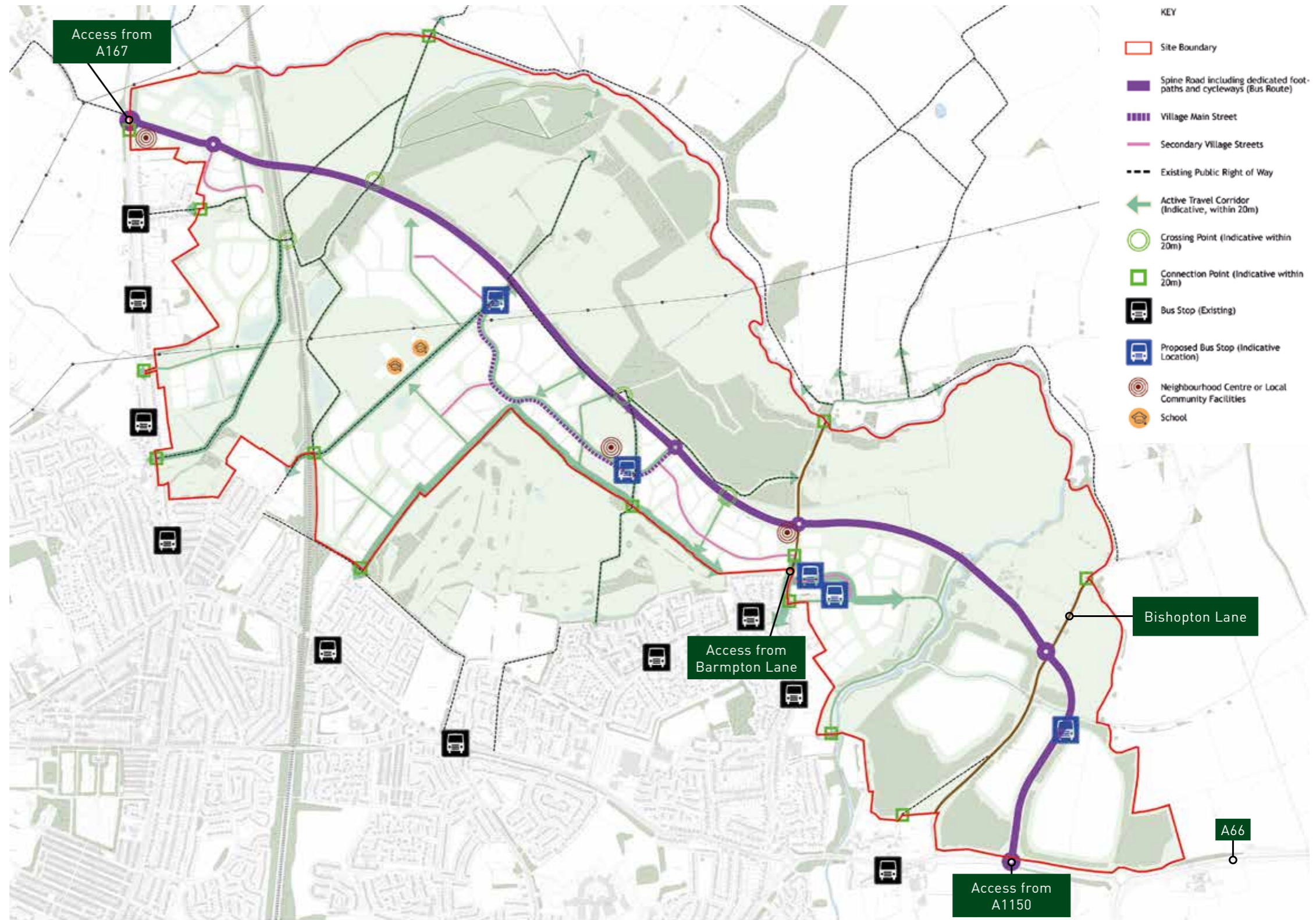


Figure 4.7 Illustrative Access and Road Hierarchy Plan

4 | Masterplan Framework

Land Uses

The plan across presents the proposed development parcels and land uses.

Residential

The development parcels shown provide the locations for residential dwellings (Use Class C3). Where appropriate, apartments and /or retirement properties could be provided (Use Class C2/C3).

Neighbourhood Centre and Local Community Facilities

The development will include a centrally located and well connected Neighbourhood Centre providing facilities which could include a health care facilities (GPs /Dentists), education, retail, food and drink facilities, consistent with Policy H 10 (part b). It is also anticipated that there will be employment opportunities at the Neighbourhood Centre.

To deliver a sense of place making, and timely delivery of social infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Centre, it is important that the phasing of the development on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline should progress from the parcels adjacent to Barmpton Lane west towards the central area of the allocation.

The Masterplan also includes the proposed locations for other Local Community Facilities across the site consistent with Policy H 10 (part c). This also responds to the principle in the Design Code which identifies the objective to achieve 20 minute neighbourhoods. Consistent with Figure 6.2 in the Local Plan, this includes a location to the west of the East Coast Mainline, and in the development cell to the east of Barmpton Lane.

School(s)

The Masterplan provides a location for the potential delivery of a primary school and a reserved space for a secondary school (5 hectares), consistent with Policy H 10 (part d). The need for schools on the site will be kept under review.

Land East of River Skerne

The Masterplan does not define the proposed land use of the land east of the Skerne. Consistent with paragraph 6.10.9 of the Local Plan, and page 111 of the adopted Design Code, employment uses may be suitable, which will be assessed as part of a review of the Local Plan. As detailed in Section 7 of this document, this area of Skertingham is identified as a later phase of the development, which coincides with the requirement for the completion of the Local Distributor Road in accordance with Policy H 10 of the Local Plan.

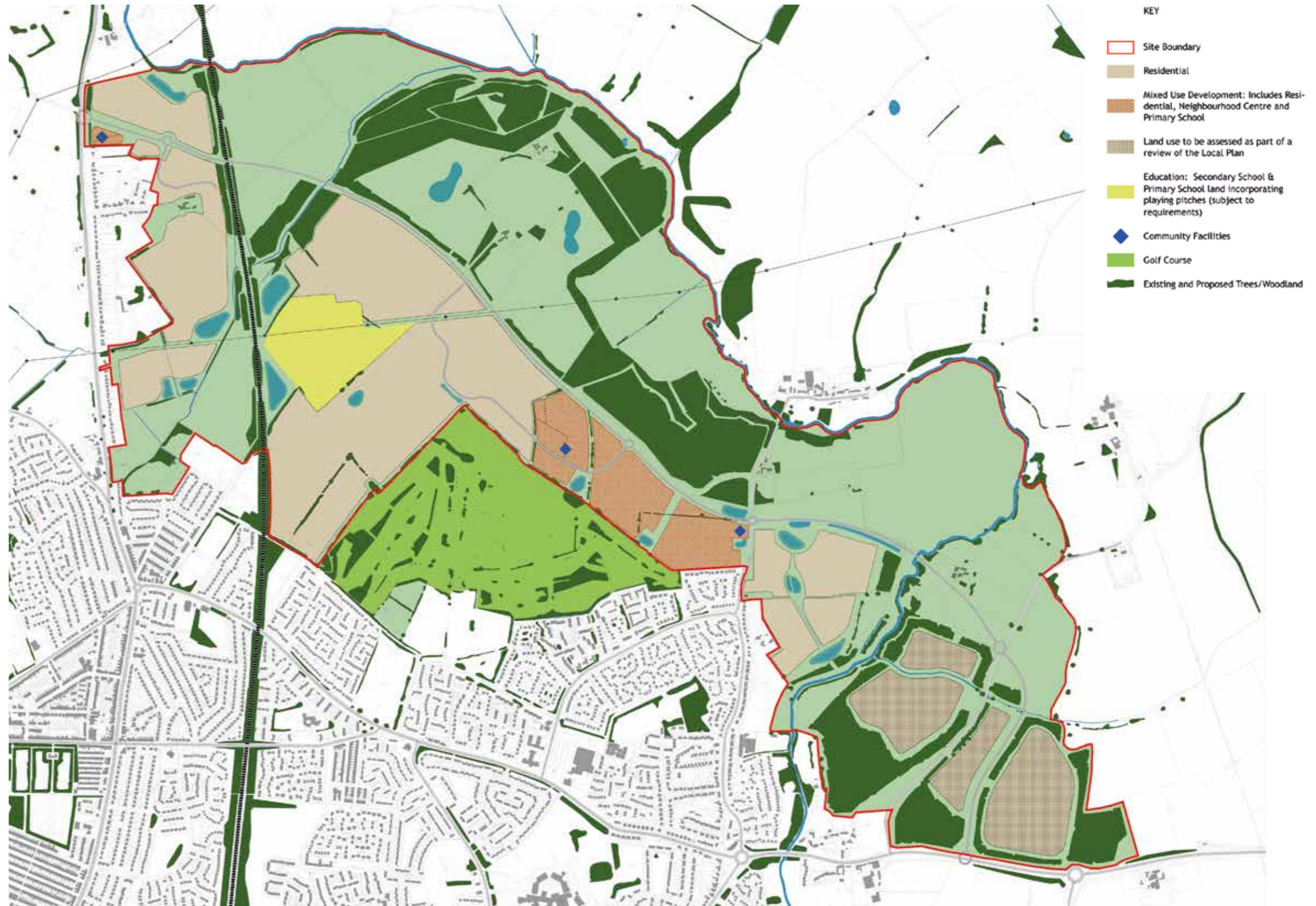


Figure 4.8 Land Use Plan

Density / Building Heights

Density

The density of development will vary across the site and respond to constraints and opportunities. Higher densities will be delivered in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Centre and other Local Community Facilities; and around other key sustainable transport infrastructure. Development will be of a lower density around the edges and more sensitive areas of the development.

The plan opposite does not show detailed density parameters for the area to the east of the Skerne. The Local Plan Review/review of the Masterplan will consider the appropriate densities.

Building Heights

The building heights across the site will broadly follow the approach to density. Building heights will increase above 2 storeys in locations where the density across the development increases.

This will in part respond the character area principles and respond to locations where a stronger urban form is defined.

Parcel Codes

Parcel codes should be prepared for each development parcel, or phase, which demonstrate how the vision and objectives, and other principles in the Design Code, can be achieved. This should be demonstrated through the submission of a Compliance Statement with each planning application.

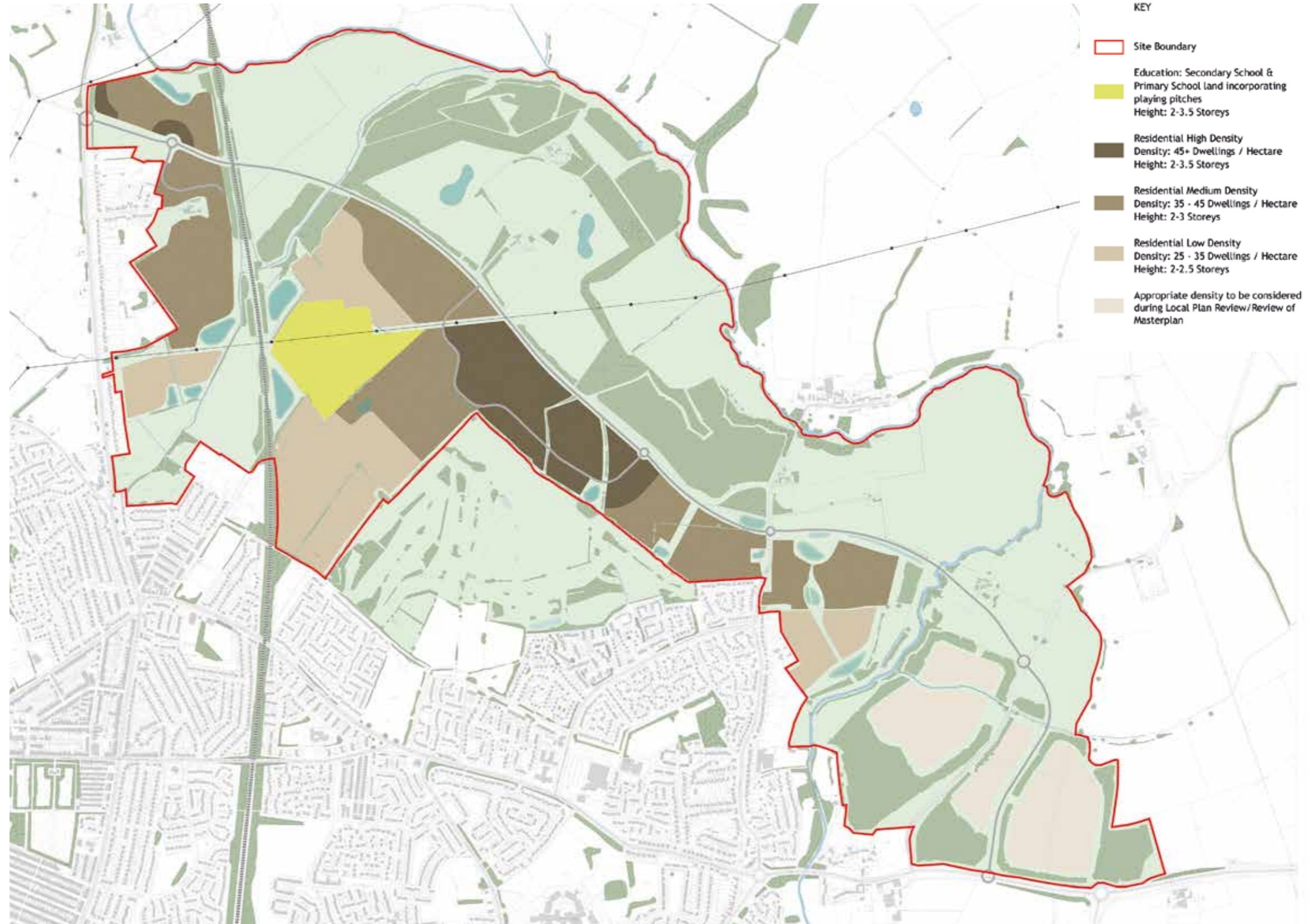


Figure 4.9 Density Plan

5 | Design and Character

Character Areas

This section of the Masterplan provides an overview of the approach to the design of the proposed development and how it will follow the principles set out in the Design Code.

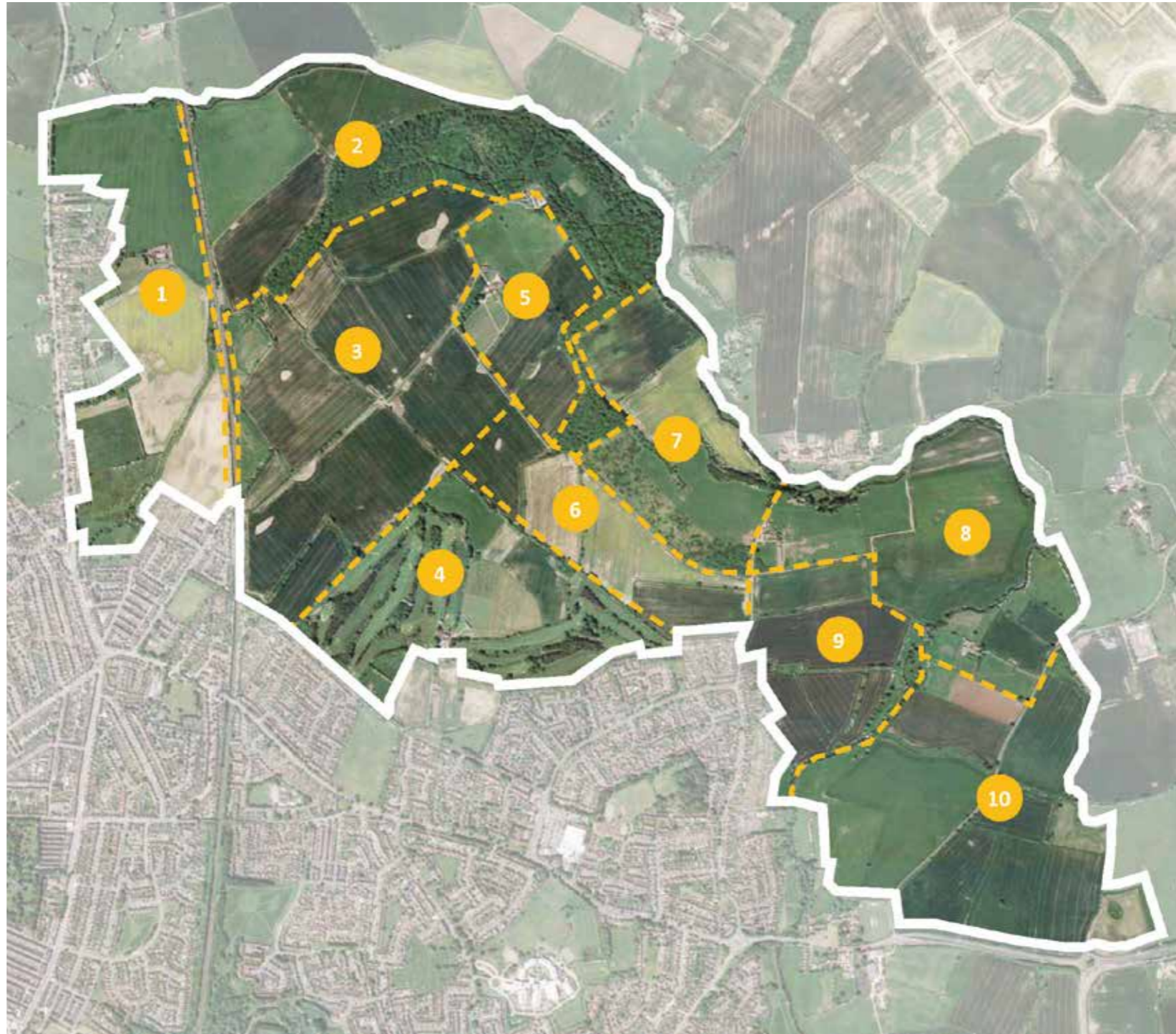
The Design Code identifies ten Character Areas across the Skerningham site as shown opposite.

The Beaumont Hill Character Area (1) is located to the west of the East Coast Mainline. The remaining nine character areas are located to the east of the East Coast Mainline.

The Design Code describes how only 45%-55% of the site is likely to be developed and four of the identified character areas relate to the areas to the north of the site which will be retained and enhanced as green space. These character areas include Skerningham Woods (2), Manor House View (5), Quarry Woods (7) and Barmpton Forest (8).

The Masterplan recognises the need to retain and enhance existing Public Rights of Way to ensure public access is maintained. There is also a need for an appropriate design response to nearby heritage assets (including Skerningham Manor) and to retain openness and separation between the development and Barmpton Village. These areas are also likely to support the strategies relating to the management of surface water, biodiversity net gain and nutrient neutrality. The Design Code also recognises that some of these areas will continue to be used for productive agricultural use.

The existing Golf Club is also identified as a character area (The Fairways (6)). As noted earlier in the Masterplan, the Golf Club is to remain in situ and the golf club will therefore be removed from the planning application boundaries.



- Key:
- 1 Beaumont Hill
 - 2 Skerningham Woods
 - 3 Skerningham Lane West
 - 4 Golf Course (The Fairways)
 - 5 Manor House View
 - 6 Skerningham Lane East
 - 7 Quarry Woods
 - 8 Barmpton Forest
 - 9 Barmpton Lane
 - 10 Bishopton Lane

Plan from Design Code - page 85

Design and Appearance of the Development

The remaining Character Areas – Beaumont Hill (1), Skerningham Lane West (3), Skerningham Lane East (6), Barmpton Lane (9) and Bishopton Lane (10) – are generally located in the southern part of the site and will therefore be the focus for the built elements of the proposed development.

Following the principles set out in the Design Code, the majority of development will be located to the south of the Local Distributor Road (LDR). There are a few exceptions and such areas will be connected by appropriate crossing facilities. The LDR is a key part of the infrastructure and it has been informed through discussions with Network Rail in relation to the proposed location of the crossing over the East Coast Mainline. Its route has also been informed by a review of constraints.

A limited number of development parcels have been identified in the Masterplan to be located to the north of the LDR, including the development cells in the Beaumont Hill Character Area. Amendments since the consultation draft has resulted in a reconfiguration of the road where parcels were previously shown to the north in the Skerningham Lane East and Barmpton Lane Character Areas.

The Design Code is clear that the development at Skerningham will avoid “*becoming a monoculture in terms of architectural style or planting character*”. It goes on to state that there is an “*opportunity for the overall development to have a cohesive character but for a distinct identity of the individual hamlets to be defined and designed*”.

One of the key objectives, in order to deliver the vision, is to create a sense of place with a strong identity, but one that architecturally is distinctive to Darlington. The Design Code states (on page 74):

“Building designs should be based on compact, simple forms which draw from the Darlington vernacular and are a contemporary interpretation of the historic designs. The form, scale and layout are to contribute to the sense of place and help create a community feel...”

Parcel Codes will be prepared for each development parcel and/or block of development and submitted as part of future planning applications. The Parcel Codes will translate the key principles that have been established in both the Design Code and this Masterplan.



Image from Design Code - page 74

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Transport

Accessibility

The Design Code for the site encourages the creation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. The development includes the provision of a centrally located neighbourhood centre to support new development. It will also include the provision of new school(s), health hub and smaller retail/local community facilities, subject to needs.

Alongside the provision of facilities, access routes have been considered to maximise walking, cycling and public transport links. Active Travel Corridors are identified which will include segregated footpaths and cycle paths (traffic-free routes) which have been routed to follow the desire lines towards the key destinations within the site. The development will also follow the principles established in the Design Code, which details the specification of paths to be incorporated as part of the road hierarchy. These routes will be designed cognisant of the LTN 1/20 guidance.

Once complete, the development will be largely self-serving, albeit with connections to the existing services and facilities of Darlington town centre. In the short term, the early phases of the development will provide connections to the services and public transport infrastructure.

In addition to the provision and/or improvements to footpaths and cycleways both within and immediately close to the site, where required the development will provide contributions to sustainable transport measures. This will be in the form of financial contributions paid to the Council to deliver wider improvements to the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the local area.

The site benefits from existing public transport services. Development in the early phases will be accessible to existing services on the A167 (to the west) and on Whinbush Way (to the east) which provide frequent links to Darlington. Development in Phase 1 (to the east of the allocation) will consider an extension of the existing service (No.10) to Barmpton Lane. The No.10 Service can be extended further in subsequent phases to serve the centrally located neighbourhood centre.

During the later phases there is an opportunity to either divert or introduce new services into the site, which would serve the neighbourhood centre and schools in the site.

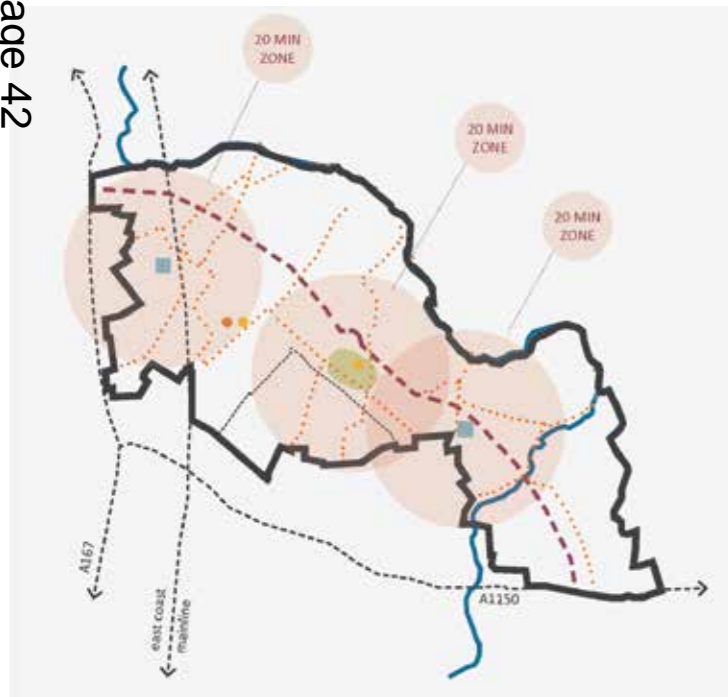


Figure 6.1 Indicative 20 Minute Neighbourhood Plan
Extract from Design Code - Figure 36

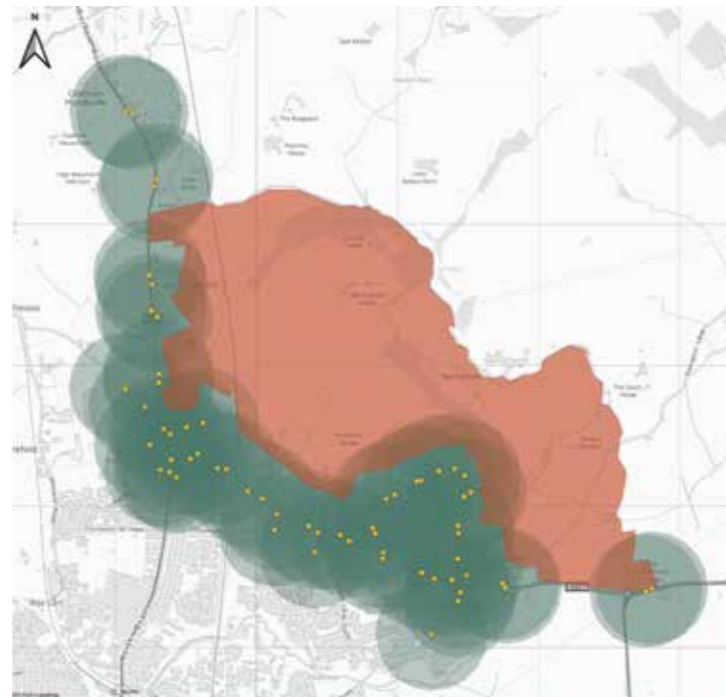


Figure 6.2 Public Transport Catchment Plan (Existing Bus Services)



Figure 6.3 Potential Bus Extension from Barmpton Lane

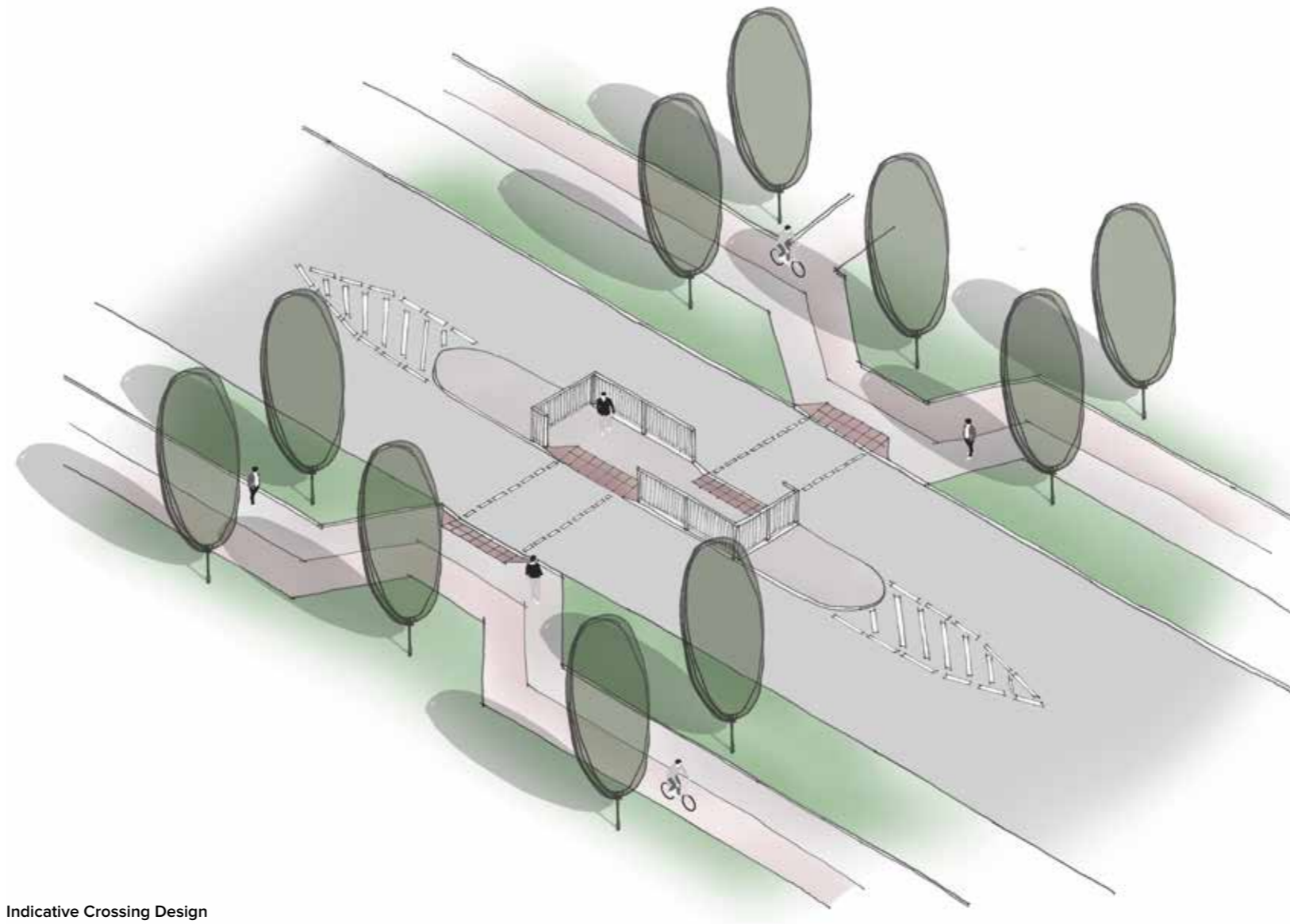
Indicative Crossing Points

Feedback from the consultation on the Masterplan included queries regarding how the proposed walking routes will intersect with the LDR.

The development will provide crossing points along the LDR which are convenient to pedestrians and cyclists at road level.

The image opposite shows the preferred format of the crossings. This example shows an unsignalled crossing, although it could also work as a controlled crossing point.

The precise format will be considered at the detailed design stage in collaboration with the Council's highways team.



Indicative Crossing Design

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Access

There are three primary access points into the site from A167, Barmpton Lane and A1150. A Local Distributor Road will connect the A167 to the A1150 and will include a bridge over the East Coast Mainline and a bridge over the River Skerne.

Local Distributor Road

The Local Distributor Road (LDR) will be delivered in the following phases:

1. The section between the A167 and the primary development access point (prior to occupation of 1st dwelling on land west of the ECML)
2. The remaining section between the A167 and the East Coast Mainline (prior to completion of land west of the ECML)
3. The section between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane (prior to occupation of 450th dwelling on land east of the ECML)
4. Completion of road in its entirety (including bridge over the ECML) (prior to occupation of 1,500th dwelling)

The proposed trigger points for the various stages of the delivery of the LDR have been refined following further highway modelling work since the Local Plan was adopted. The phased delivery of the LDR is shown on the phasing plans in Section 7 of the document.

Appropriate measures will be put in place as part of any planning permission to ensure Local Distributor Road and bridge over the ECML are delivered, as well as confirming the final routing.

In addition to the junctions with the A167 and A1150, there are likely to be junctions along the route of the LDR, including:

- A roundabout on the section between the A167 and the ECML
- A roundabout on Barmpton Lane
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) on Bishopton Lane
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Centre
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) between the ECML and the Neighbourhood Centre, to serve the development parcels and additional schools.

Discussions are ongoing with Darlington Borough Council and Network Rail in relation to the proposed crossing of the East Coast Mainline. The route of the LDR shown remains illustrative but includes the location of the bridge that has been identified following the technical work undertaken to date. Network Rail has been consulted on the preferred location and advised that the next stage is to gain approval in principle in relation to construction of the bridge. This should be secured as part of the development phase east of the A167.

As the allocation spans across multiple land ownerships, the completion of the LDR in its entirety will require all developers/landowners to directly deliver the sections that run through their land parcels where applicable along its route.

Planning applications for each phase of the development shall demonstrate that development will not prejudice the delivery of remaining phases. For example, restrictive planning conditions should be used to secure the delivery of road sections to an operational standard to the site boundaries, or the dedication of land to the Council, in order to avoid ransom scenarios. Furthermore, each application should also contribute proportionately to common infrastructure, where justified.

Highway Improvements

The development will deliver wider improvements to the local highway network, including the following.

- A66/Little Burdon Circulatory Upgrade
- A1150/ Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements
- A167/Burtree Lane Junction Improvements
- Barmpton Lane upgrade works including its junction with Whinbush Way

Discussions are also taking place with National Highways in relation to the impact of the various phases of the development on the strategic highway network. Any physical mitigation or S106 contribution will be agreed as part of the planning application process.

Darlington Northern Relief Road

On 26 January 2024, Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) approved a transport programme of £1 billion, which includes £250 million to fund the delivery of Darlington Northern Relief Road (DNRR).

The progress of the DNRR project will be kept under review to ensure that the delivery of Skerningham would not prejudice the delivery of the DNRR and vice versa.

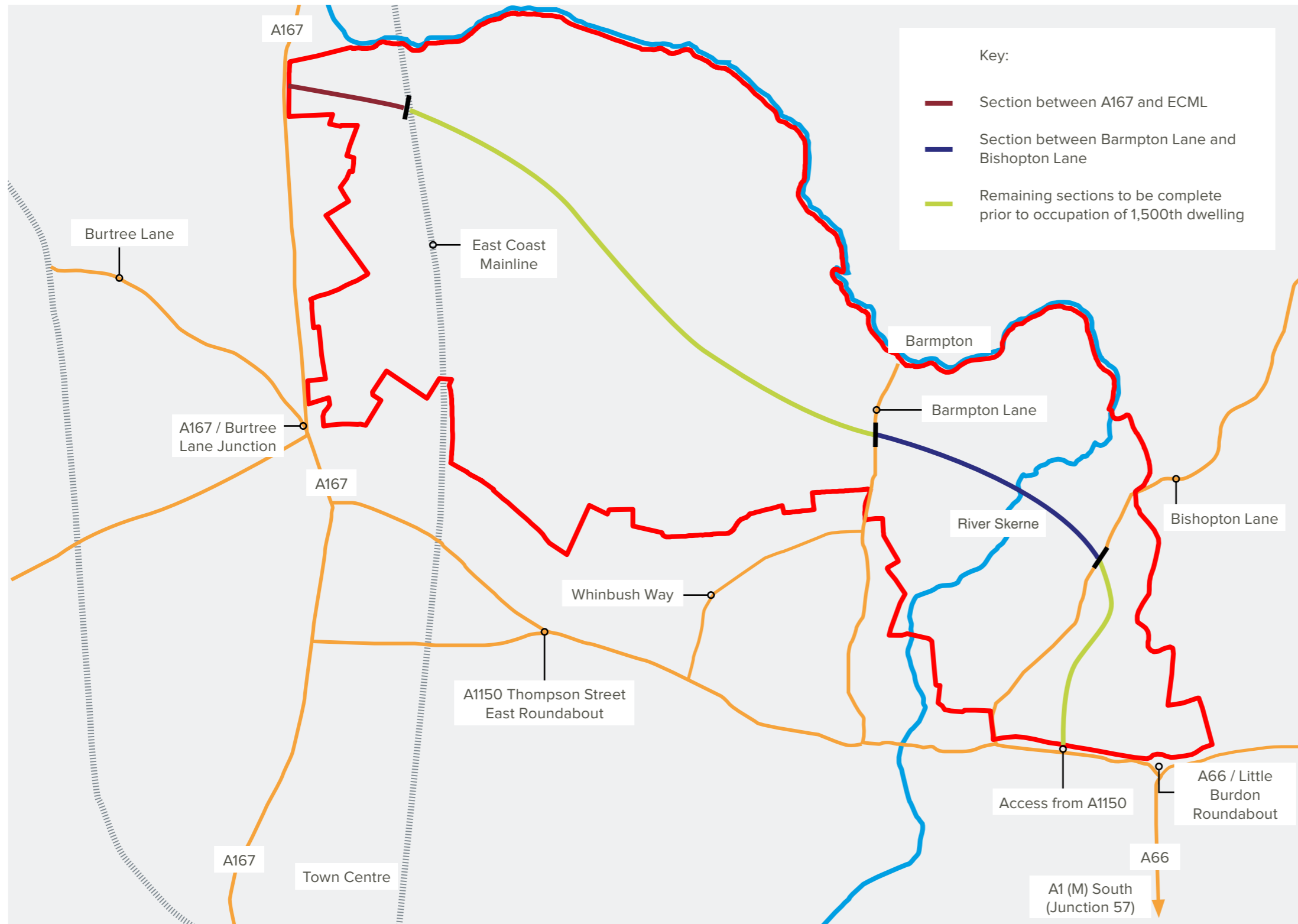


Figure 6.4 Illustrative Local Distributor Road Route and Highway Improvement Locations

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Drainage

Key principles for surface water management at the site have been established and the development should:

- Restrict surface water run off to existing green field rates.
- Allow for climate change and urban creep, resulting in future proofing against flood risk for the life of the development.
- Include SUDS and attenuation features.

Initial assessments indicate that infiltration will not be possible. Using existing topography, the development has been zoned into catchments to follow the existing directions of fall. Each zone has then been modelled to estimate the run off rate, storage requirement, and likely storage location. A range of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be integrated into the development, providing stormwater filtering and attenuation, reduction of flood risk, improvements to water quality and increase to biodiversity.

Terms of foul water, Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) has identified two outfall locations for foul run off from the development:

- Flows from development to the west of the ECML should discharge into the existing public sewer at Harrowgate Village.
- Flows from development to the east of the ECML should discharge into the existing public sewer on site to the west of Great Burdon.

Appropriate connections to the existing drainage infrastructure network can be achieved. NWL will carry out any upgrading works required to their network to facilitate the development which will be informed by a projected build rate from the development to aid future planning of any upgrades.

As the site is located within the Tees catchment, it is affected by Nutrient Neutrality. This is as a result of Natural England identifying the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) to be in an unfavourable condition. By 2030, there is a requirement for water companies to upgrade sewage treatment works to reduce harmful nutrients from treated waste water. Until this time, there is a requirement for developments to mitigate these impacts. For the early phases of the development, this will be considered at the planning application stage.

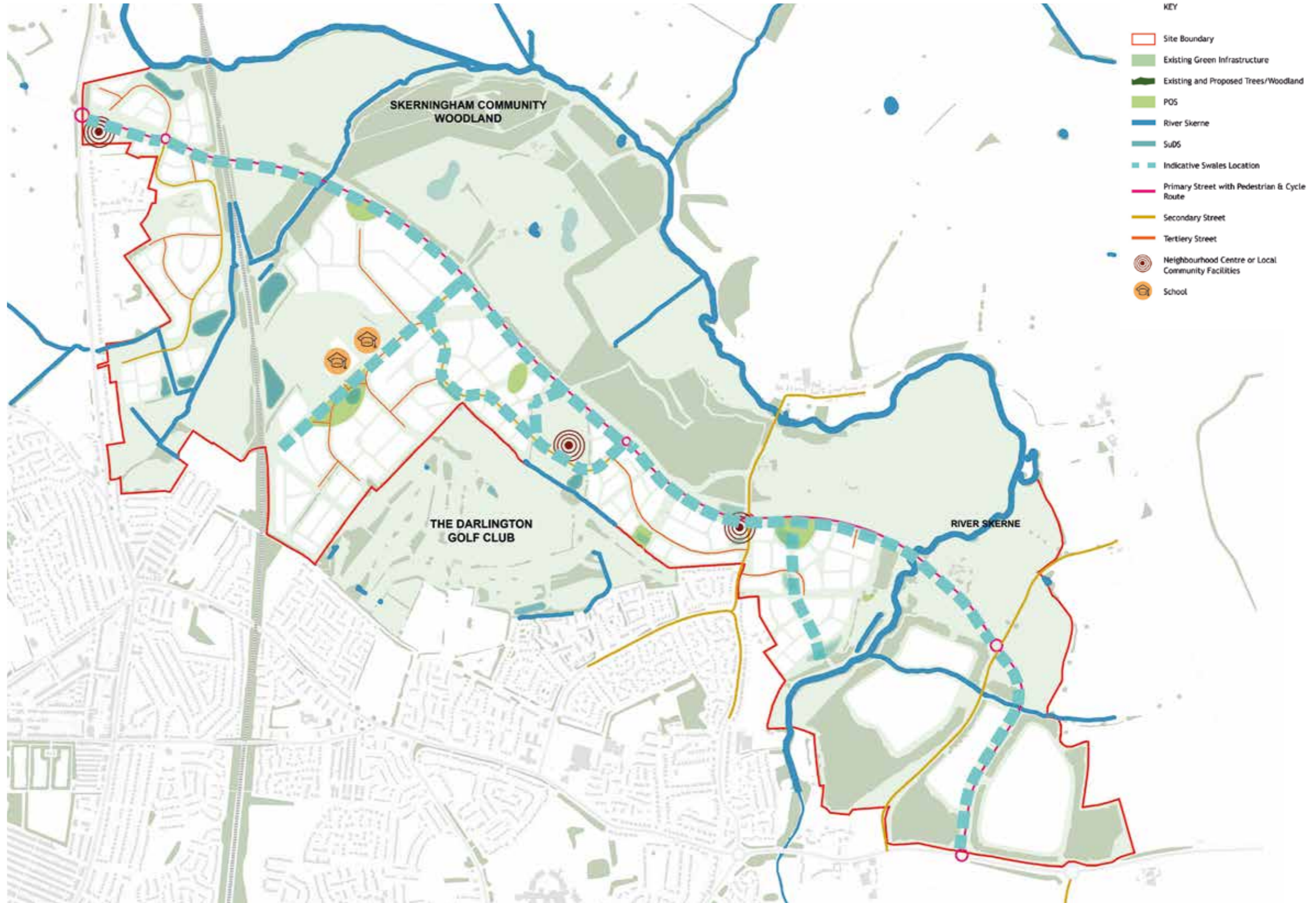


Figure 6.5 Drainage Plan

Neighbourhood Centre and Local Community Facilities

The development will include a centrally located Neighbourhood Centre to be located in the 'Skerningham Lane East' Character Area forming a 'heart' and focal point within the development.

The centrally located Neighbourhood Centre, as required by Policy H 10 (b), is a vital part of achieving placemaking at Skerningham, and its priority for delivery has influenced the phasing of the development.

There are two other locations within the site where local community facilities will be provided. These are identified to be located in the 'Beaumont Hill' Character Area (to the west of the East Coast Mainline) and the second will be located east of Barmpton Lane in the 'Barmpton Lane' Character Area. The local community facilities are located in the initial phases of the development to support the early delivery of new homes on the site.

The phasing of development (in Section 7) recognises the importance of place making and the role of delivering social infrastructure to support the new communities at Skerningham. As such, from the initial phases adjacent to Barmpton Lane, the direction of development in the plan period moves west to deliver the Neighbourhood Centre in the central area of the allocation.

The provision of retail space on the site should be of a scale to complement and not conflict with existing district centres. Where local community facilities are identified, these are likely to comprise local convenience shops of circa 200-400sqm in size. On the eastern side of the allocation, consideration should be given to the inclusion of a public house.

The design and appearance of the local centre should be distinctive to Darlington in its use of architectural style and materials. Scale and massing will help to create a defined centre (or heart) for Skerningham.

Green space and public realm should also be incorporated to help create a sense of place. There is also an opportunity to include formal play space and allotments as part of the neighbourhood centre.

At upper floor levels, there is an opportunity to include apartments and/or space for business/employment uses.

Health Hub

The Neighbourhood Centre will include a Health Hub to accommodate GPs and Dentists.

In advance of the delivery of the Neighbourhood Centre (which will include a Health Hub), the development will be supported by existing services in Darlington. The nearest existing Medical Practice / GP Surgery to the site is Whinfield Medical Practice. The catchment area for Whinfield Medical Practice includes a partial area of the site (including the initial phases of land to the east of the East Coast Mainline) and is currently accepting new patients.

The Health Hub comprises common social infrastructure for the wider Skerningham development and therefore planning obligations should be used where appropriate to secure proportionate financial contributions towards its delivery.



Extract from Design Code - Figure 45

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Education

The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings respectively.

A development of up to 3,700 dwellings overall equates to a need for 740 primary school places and 444 secondary school places. As the development will take around 25 years to complete, there is a need to keep the education requirement from the development under review.

Within the current plan period, 1,450 dwellings are projected to be delivered in the period to 2036. This equates to a need for 290 primary school places and 174 secondary school places.

Policy H10 (d) requires the delivery of the first primary school before occupation of the 450th dwelling – subject to the available capacity within existing or other local schools. It requires that the timescales for the delivery of the additional primary school and secondary school would be identified in the infrastructure phasing plan and/or through the review of the infrastructure requirements prior to the occupation of the 1,450th dwelling where the education requirements and capacity levels will be considered.

The Masterplan has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Head of Skills and Employability who is responsible for managing the provision of school places. It has been confirmed the latest pupil projections data indicates that there are sufficient surplus places at both primary and secondary school levels to accommodate pupils that would be generated by the delivery of 1,450 dwellings in the plan period.

The Council's preference is to utilise the surplus of pupil places in the nearby existing schools before commencing construction of a new school.

Therefore, the need for the first primary school is not required before the occupation of the 450th dwellings and the educational need arising from the development will be kept under review. The Masterplan includes land reserved for the provision of a primary school and secondary school which would come forward subject to further review.

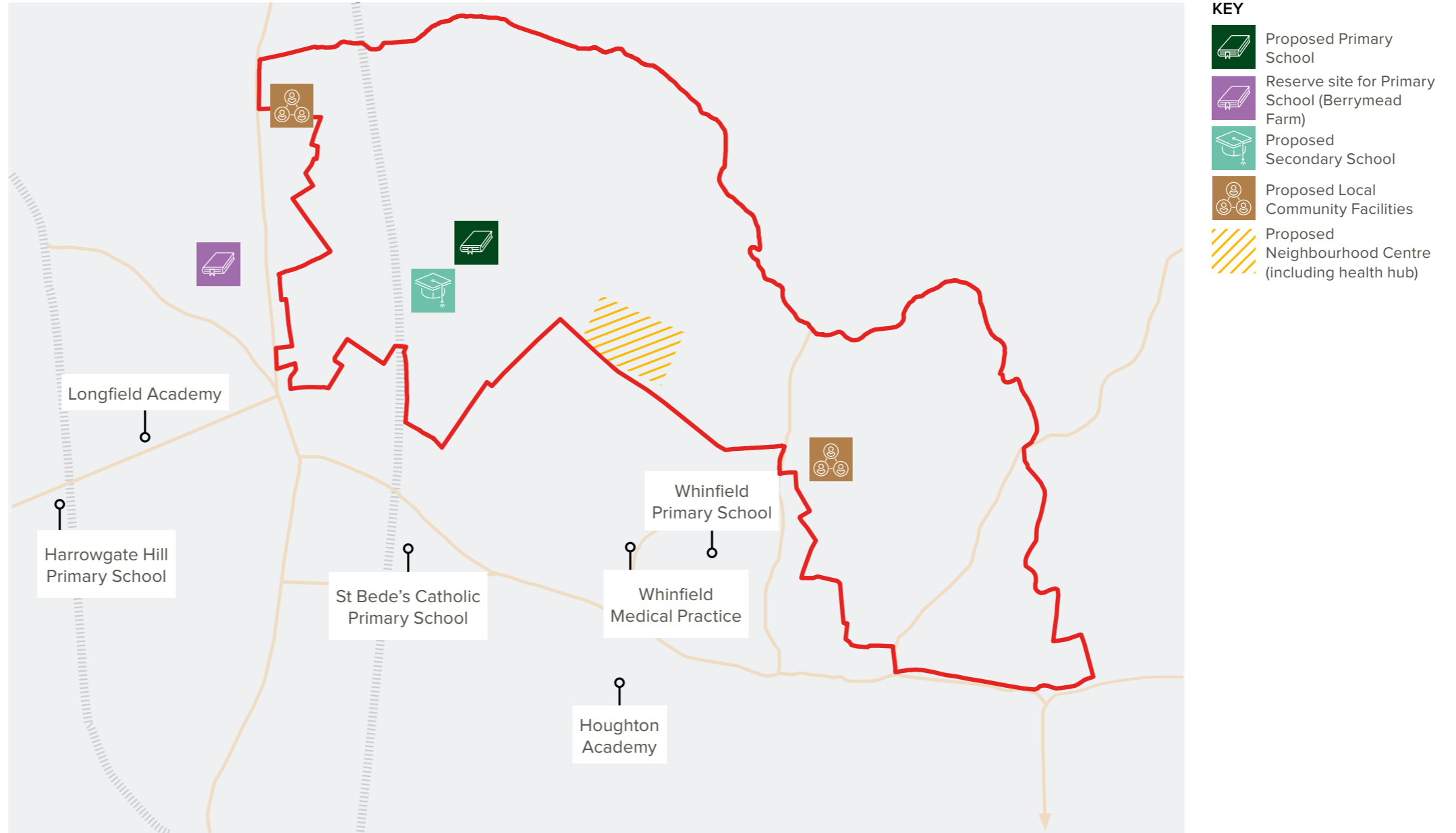


Figure 6.6 Education and Health Facilities

Educational Need to 2036

The education need associated with the delivery of Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the development (up to 2036) will be met by existing schools. The nearest primary school to the land to the west of the East Coast Mainline is Harrowgate Primary School and the nearest secondary school is Longfield Academy. The nearest primary school to the early phases of development on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline is Whinfield Primary School and the nearest secondary school is Haughton Academy. It is likely that the surplus capacity in these schools alone will be able to meet the educational need of the development to be delivered in the plan period.

The accessibility of these schools has been considered and the plans in Figures 5.6 and 5.7 include the likely walking routes. To the west of the site, the existing infrastructure along the A167 is good and there are existing crossing points to allow ease of crossing to Longfield Road.

To the east of the site, the development will deliver improvements to Barmpton Lane and its junction with Whinbush Way. Existing routes along Whinbush Way and Whinfield Road (A1150) are considered to be a very good standard.

The need and timing for the provision of schools on the site beyond the plan period (2036) will be kept under review and the strategy for the later phases of the development will be considered prior to the occupation of 1,450 dwellings on the site.

In the event that the review identifies a need for a primary and/or secondary school on the reserve land, planning obligations should be used where appropriate to secure proportionate financial contributions towards its delivery.

In the event that more than 1,450 dwellings are projected to be delivered within the current plan period, this will require a further review of the capacity available within existing schools. This may also trigger the need for a review to understand if there is a need to release the reserve land on the site for the primary school and/or secondary school.

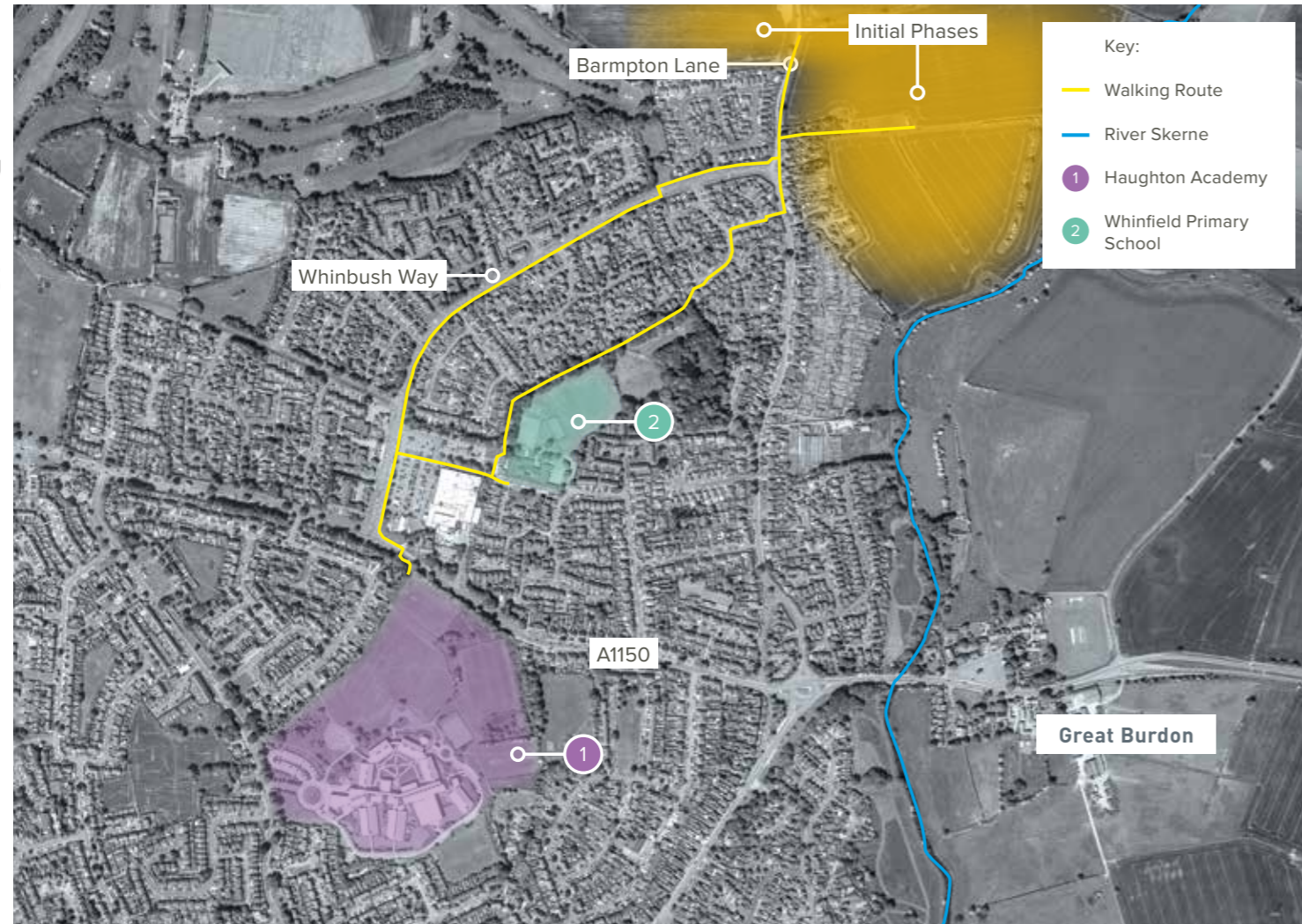


Figure 6.7 Walking routes to nearest existing schools from land to the east of the allocation

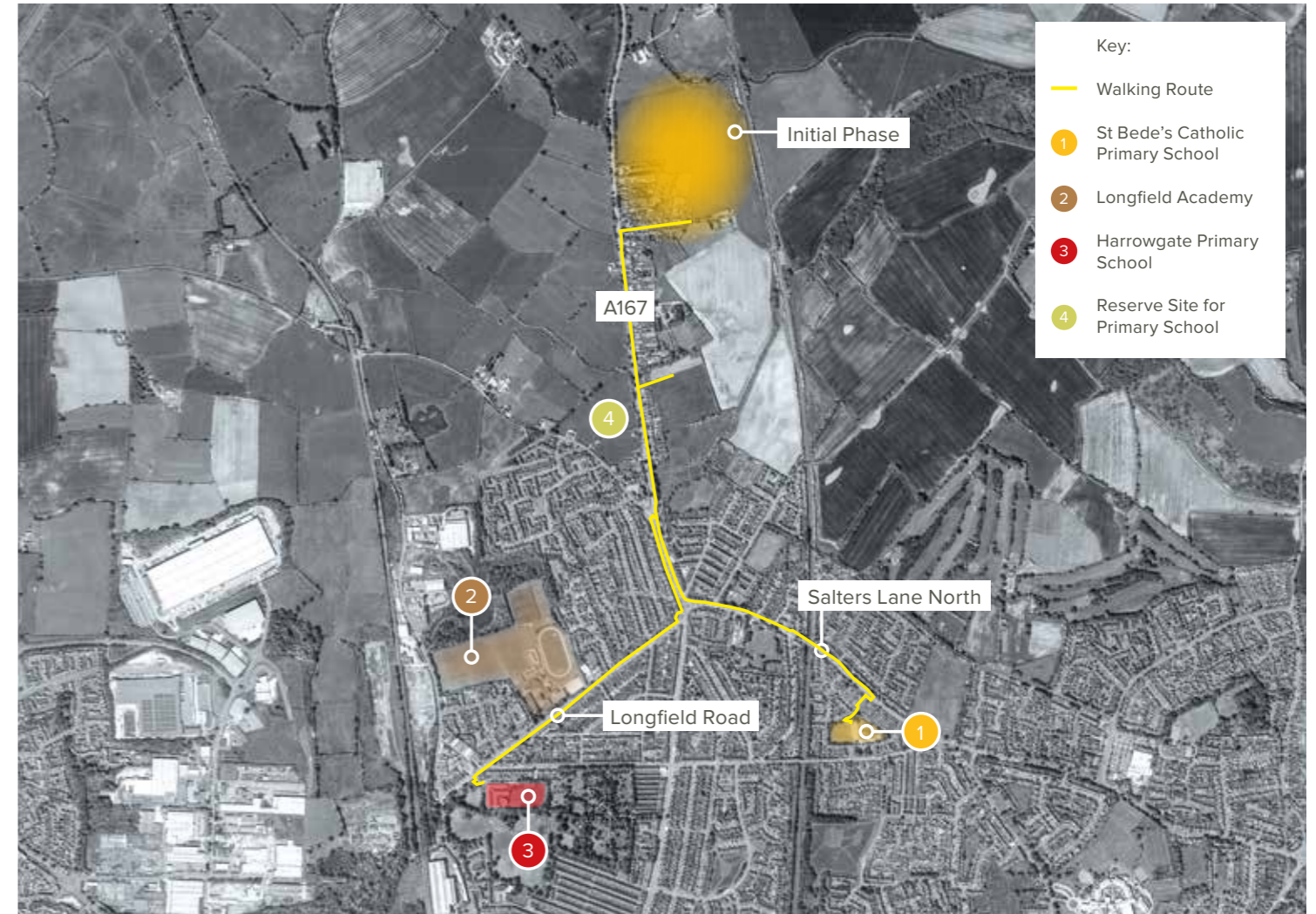


Figure 6.8 Walking routes to nearest existing schools from land to the west of the allocation

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Open Space, Sports and Recreation

Around 55% of the allocated area of Skerningham is likely to comprise green and/or open space. This will include the area located north of the proposed Local Distributor Road, to the east of the East Coast Mainline and green spaces and linkages within the development to the south of the road.

It is recognised that Skerningham Woods is enjoyed by the local community and the wider area adjacent to the River Skerne will be enhanced. This will be a 'Destination Area' of open/green space in the site. The development will also include new areas of natural/semi-natural open space, managed areas of green space, playing fields (associated with schools and potentially community use agreements) and public areas of open space. Arable land will also be retained in some locations.

A key objective of the development is to promote healthy living and support the NHS Healthy New Towns initiative and this has shaped the open space and play strategy and also the opportunities that will be provided for local food growth.

The Open Space and Play Strategy includes a centrally located facility as part of the Neighbourhood Centre. Each development cell is likely to include Local Areas for Play (LAPs) with 'play on the way' provision along key connections towards the Neighbourhood Centre. The development could also include informal play features in the Skerningham Woods area to the north of the LDR.

To support local food growth, the development is anticipated to provide opportunities in the form of allotments and/or other schemes which follow the Incredible Edible Model, such as community orchards and community grow zones. Indicative areas for this provision are shown on the plan opposite.

Whilst the majority of these areas of the site are likely to be maintained via a management company, there are opportunities for local community groups or trusts to take responsibility for the longer-term management and care of the food growth areas and the Skerningham Woods area.



Figure 6.9 Open Space Plan

Country Park

The Design Code introduces the possibility of creating a country park in the northern part of the site, which would further establish the existing routes that are available.

This has been considered further by the lead developers during the preparation of the Masterplan. It is proposed that the development will reflect the aspirations for a country park feel in this part of the site, although it is intended to keep it informal for existing and new residents to enjoy.

Accordingly, the Masterplan does not make provision for a separate visitor centre, but instead focuses on the Neighbourhood Centre as a focal point, and the availability of parking, routes and crossing points from this location.

Existing routes will be enhanced with information panels and signage, along with improvements to surfaces where appropriate.

The plan opposite includes indicative locations for hideaways or such features (subject to detailed design) that could be included in this area.



6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development will achieve a net gain for biodiversity consistent with the requirements of Policy ENV 8 of the Local Plan and the Design Code. This will be delivered on a phased basis and each planning application should demonstrate how this will be achieved. In some instances, it may be possible to deliver biodiversity net gain early in the development that will mitigate the impact of development of later phases.

On land to the west of the ECML, land to the north of the site (close to the River Skerne) would be dedicated for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). There could also be further areas available adjacent to the ECML, as part of the SuDS and in other green linkages between the development cells.

On land to the east of the ECML, there is a significant area of land to the north of the Local Distributor Road that will remain as 'green' space. To support the early phases of the development, land close to Skertingham Woods and is therefore a logical space to introduce further tree planting and areas dedicated to nature. It is also located a short distance from the early phases of development on the eastern side of the ECML, meaning it will be less likely to be subject to disturbance.

Other key areas where BNG opportunities have been identified include the areas adjacent to the River Skerne and ECML. Sustainable drainage infrastructure will be designed to provide ecological opportunities. For example, attenuation ponds, should be designed where appropriate to include at least a low level of permanent water. Public Rights of Way will also be retained as green corridors through the site which could provide further opportunities for enhancement in biodiversity value.

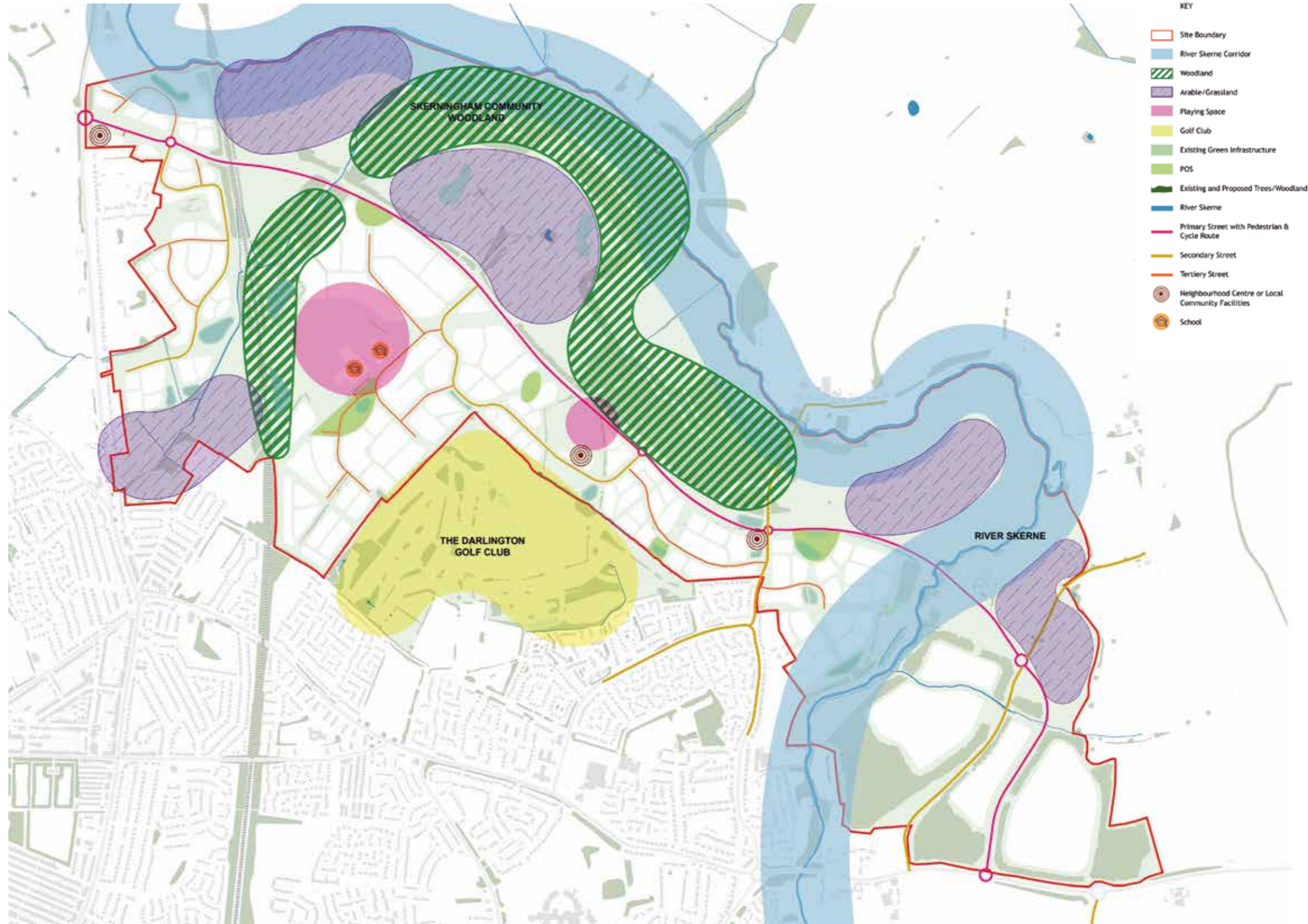


Figure 6.10 Illustrative Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy Plan

Digital Connectivity

Access to high-speed broadband has been identified as an objective in the Design Code. Accordingly, this is an infrastructure requirement for all development on the site.

A utilities assessment has been undertaken which confirms that there is superfast broadband capability in the local area. This provides the opportunity to install a super fast service to the development.

Given the length of the build of the development, it should also react to the technological advances that may take place over this time to ensure that residents can benefit from the latest technology available.

Working from home is a trend which is anticipated to continue and the provision of this technology will contribute to encouraging and promoting a healthy work/life balance.

In addition to ensuring that all new homes are provided with high-speed broadband, social spaces (such as those in the Neighbourhood Centre) should also provide the latest digital and communication technology to support social interaction and businesses.

Green Technology

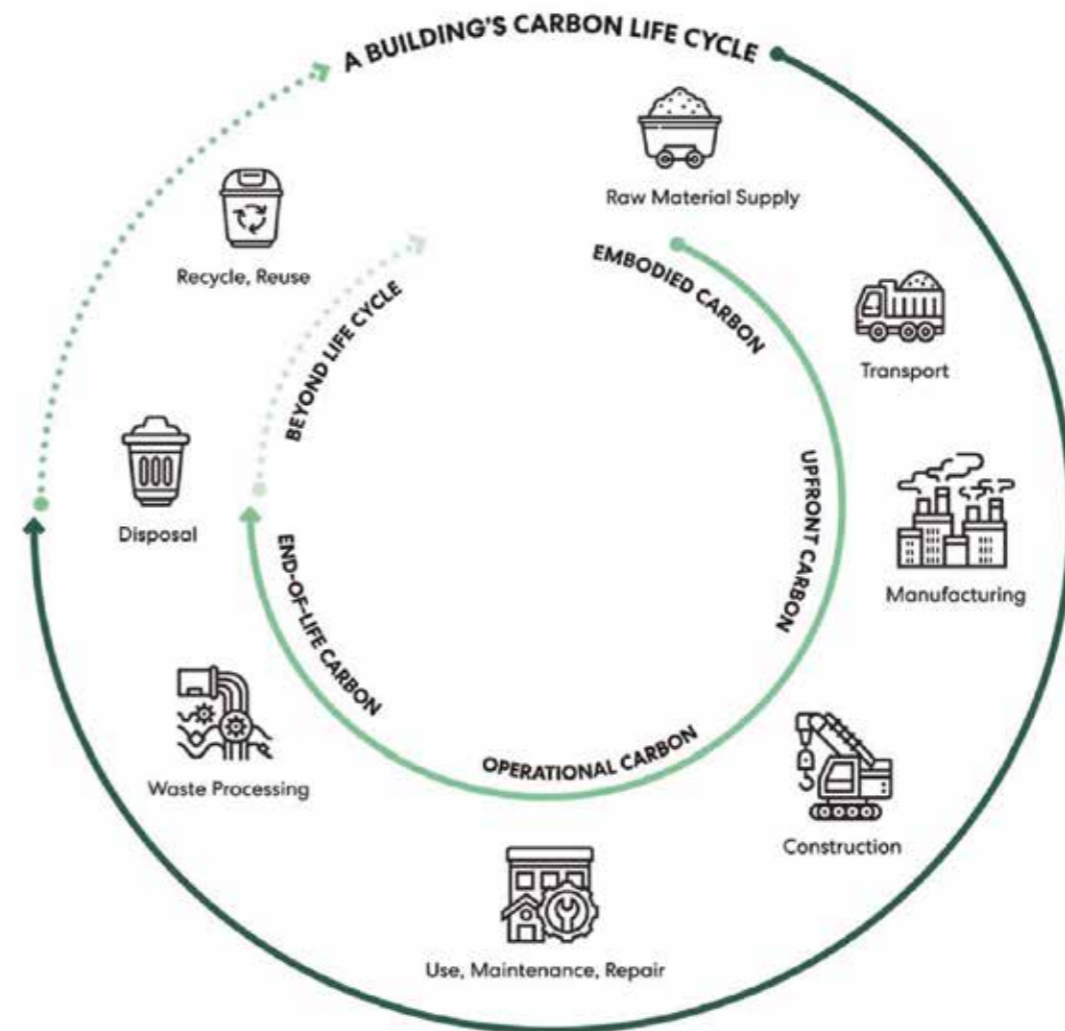
The incorporation of a low carbon energy strategy for the development was identified as an objective in the Design Code. The development should embrace the whole life cycle approach to minimising carbon emissions during the construction and occupational phases of the development.

As a starting point, the demand for energy will be minimised by measures, including:

- Designing layouts to maximise sustainable travel and movement
- Providing supporting land uses and infrastructure within walking and cycling distance from homes
- Promoting connectivity to wider sustainable transport, including public transport and car clubs
- Orientating buildings and internal layouts to maximise opportunities for solar gains
- Incorporating a fabric-first approach to the selection of materials and products
- Encouraging the use of low-carbon technologies for energy requirements

To ensure low carbon objectives are incorporated during the construction of the development, planning conditions should be used to secure the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan.

The changes to Building Regulations will be key to driving a reduction in carbon emissions, with a move towards the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard. Incorporation of technologies including PV panels, air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps provide some options for meeting these standards. However, it is likely that other options will emerge that could be included as part of the energy strategy. Given the timescale for the build out of Skerningham, it is important that the development retains flexibility to adapt to the latest technology that is available.



Extract from Design Code - Figure 82

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan

Introduction

This section of the Masterplan presents how the development of Skerningham is anticipated to come forward over six phases. Phases 1 to 3 detail the phasing of the development parcels and infrastructure that will come forward within the current Local Plan period to 2036. Phases 4 to 6 show the development that is expected to come forward post 2036.

The phasing of the development has been informed by a range influencing factors, including:

- The detailed requirements of Policy H 10, which prescribes where the initial phases of the development should be located
- The phased delivery of the Local Distributor Road, to ensure consistency with Policy H 10 (g)
- Supporting the delivery a new community, and the objectives of the both the Strategic Allocation and Garden Village, by delivering the centrally located Neighbourhood Centre (as required by Policy H 10 (b)) at the earliest opportunity.

The phasing has been defined by the milestone delivery of the key infrastructure. Therefore, some phases are shorter than others. Within the plan period to 2036, Phase 1 follows the requirement within the first paragraph of Policy H 10 to locate initial phases of the development on land adjacent to the A167 and on land adjoining Barmpton Lane. Phase 1 also includes the early delivery of environmental improvements in the area around Skerningham Manor, Low Skerningham and Skerningham Woods to allow establishment of planting.

Phase 2 coincides with when the section of the Local Distributor Road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane is required. The end of Phase 2 is also defined by the completion of the development on land in the western part of the allocation.

Phase 3 is defined by the end of the plan period (2036). The development of Phase 3 prioritises the delivery of the centrally located Neighbourhood Centre which will be achieved by directing development to the west. Due to the slippage in development starting on the site, it is now expected that 1,450 dwellings will come forward in the plan period.

As a result of this, the completion of the Local Distributor Road, prior to the occupation of the 1,500th dwelling, would then align with the quantity of development achieved during Phase 4. Phases 4, 5 and 6 include the delivery of the remaining development parcels post 2036.

As stated in Section 6 of the document, each planning application must demonstrate that it will not prejudice the delivery the remaining phases of the development. As part of this, each application should contribute proportionately to common infrastructure, where justified.

The common infrastructure includes:

- Local Distributor Road, including the bridge over the ECML and the bridge over the River Skerne
- Neighbourhood Centre, including Health Hub
- Primary School and Secondary School (subject to a review of capacity)
- Provision of Sports Pitches and associated facilities
- Open Space Strategy, including allotments/food growing opportunities

The provision of other development requirements, such as drainage infrastructure and delivery of biodiversity net gain, is expected to be met on a site-by-site / phase-by-phase basis.

As the build out of Skerningham is expected to take until 2050 to complete, it is not appropriate for this Masterplan to define the precise costs associated with the the common allocation infrastructure, given that costs are likely to change over this time. Each applicant should instead discuss, where justified, appropriate and proportionate contributions, and also delivery mechanisms, for the delivery of shared infrastructure.

Phase 1 (2025 - 2031)

Residential

- Land to the west of the East Coast Mainline ('Beaumont Hill' Character Area): 450 dwellings
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Barmpton Lane and Skerningham Lane East' Character Area): 450 dwellings
- Total: 900 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Local convenience store on land west of the East Coast Mainline (up to 400 square metres) (prior to occupation of 450th dwelling)
- Local community facilities on land east of the East Coast Mainline (circa 600 square metres) (prior to occupation of 450th dwelling)

Environmental

- Enhancements to the 'Manor House View', 'Skerningham Woods' and 'Skerningham Lane West' Character Areas (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain, to be focused on land to the north of the site
- Public Open Space, within the development cells, with potential for Allotments / Community Orchards on part of the land in the Manor House View Character Area
- Sport and Recreational provision
- Mitigation for Nutrient Neutrality
- Incorporation of low carbon technology into the Energy Strategy

Transport

Land west of the East Coast Mainline:

- Primary access (roundabout) from A167
- Section of Local Distributor Road between A167 and East Coast Mainline
- Pedestrian/cycle connection to A167
- Proportionate financial contribution towards A66 Little Burdon Roundabout
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site
- Financial contribution towards A167/Burtree Lane Junction improvements
- Financial contribution towards A1150/Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements

Land east of the East Coast Mainline:

- Vehicular access points from Barmpton Lane
- Localised improvements to Barmpton Lane and its junction with Whinbush Way
- Pedestrian/cycle connection to Barmpton Lane
- Proportionate financial contribution towards A66 Little Burdon Roundabout
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site
- Financial contribution towards A1150 / Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements (if required)
- Explore extension to Bus Service No.10 into Phase 1

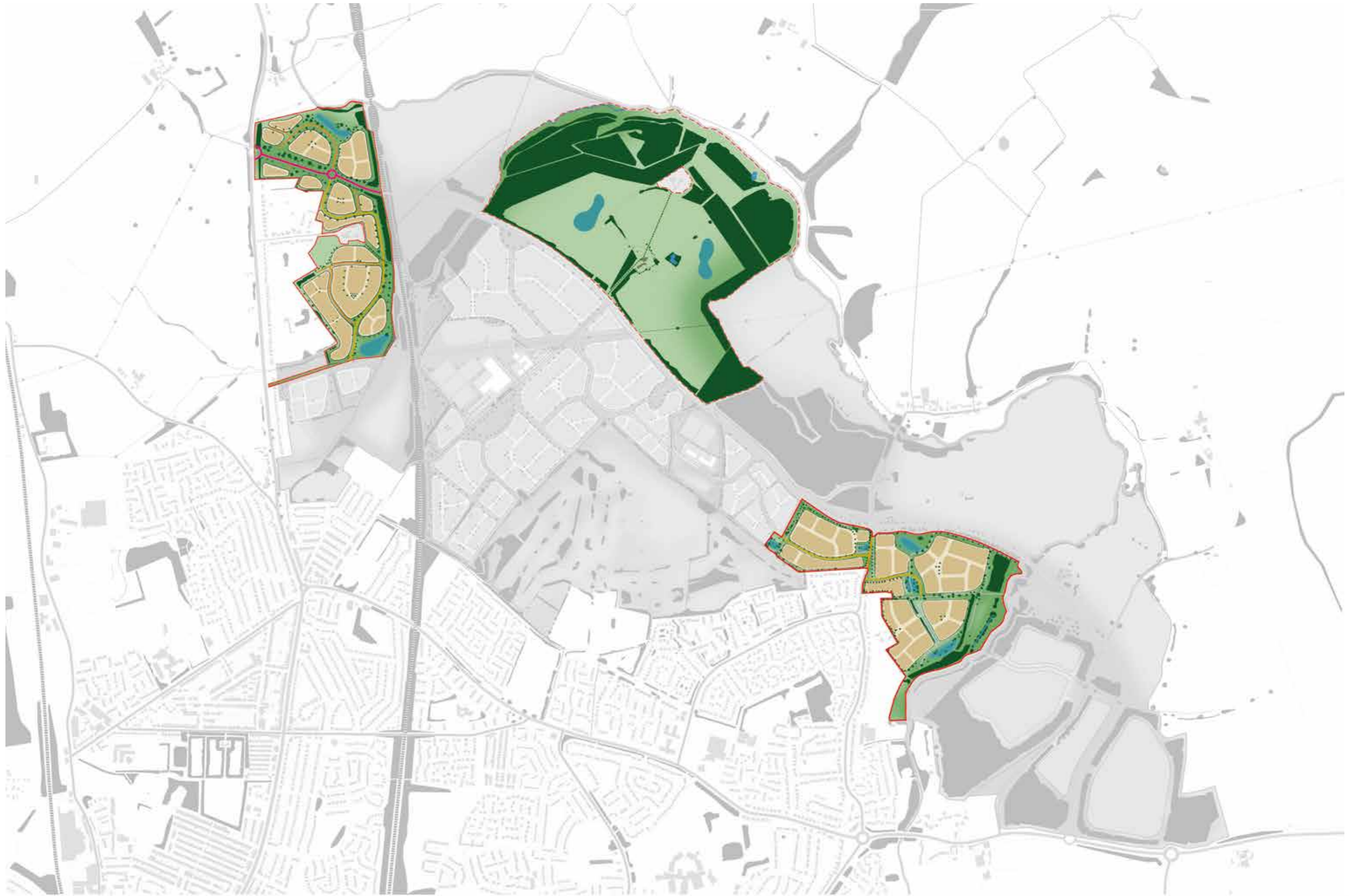
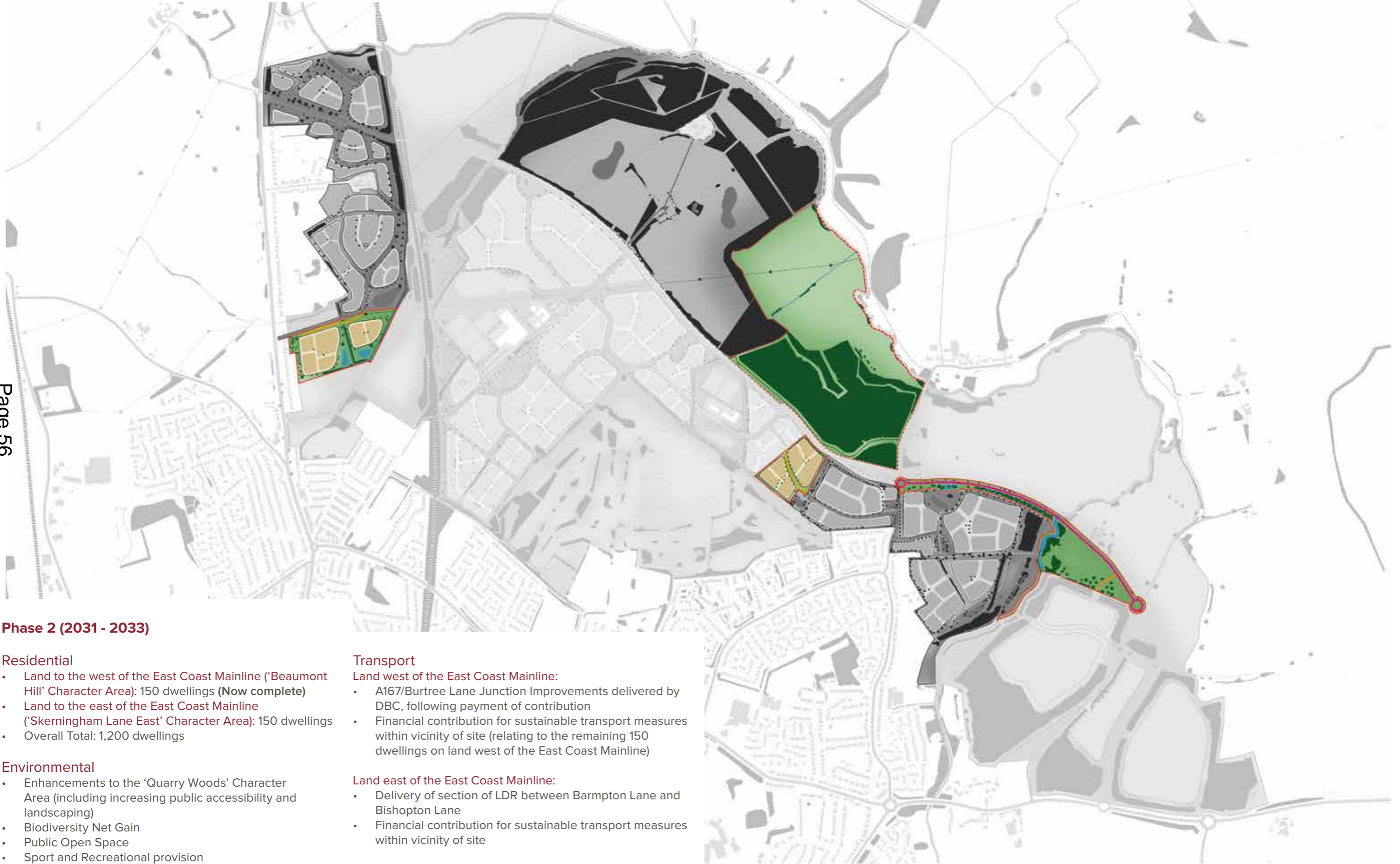


Figure 7.1 Phase 1 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan



Phase 2 (2031 - 2033)

Residential

- Land to the west of the East Coast Mainline ('Beaumont Hill' Character Area): 150 dwellings (**Now complete**)
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' Character Area): 150 dwellings
- Overall Total: 1,200 dwellings

Environmental

- Enhancements to the 'Quarry Woods' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

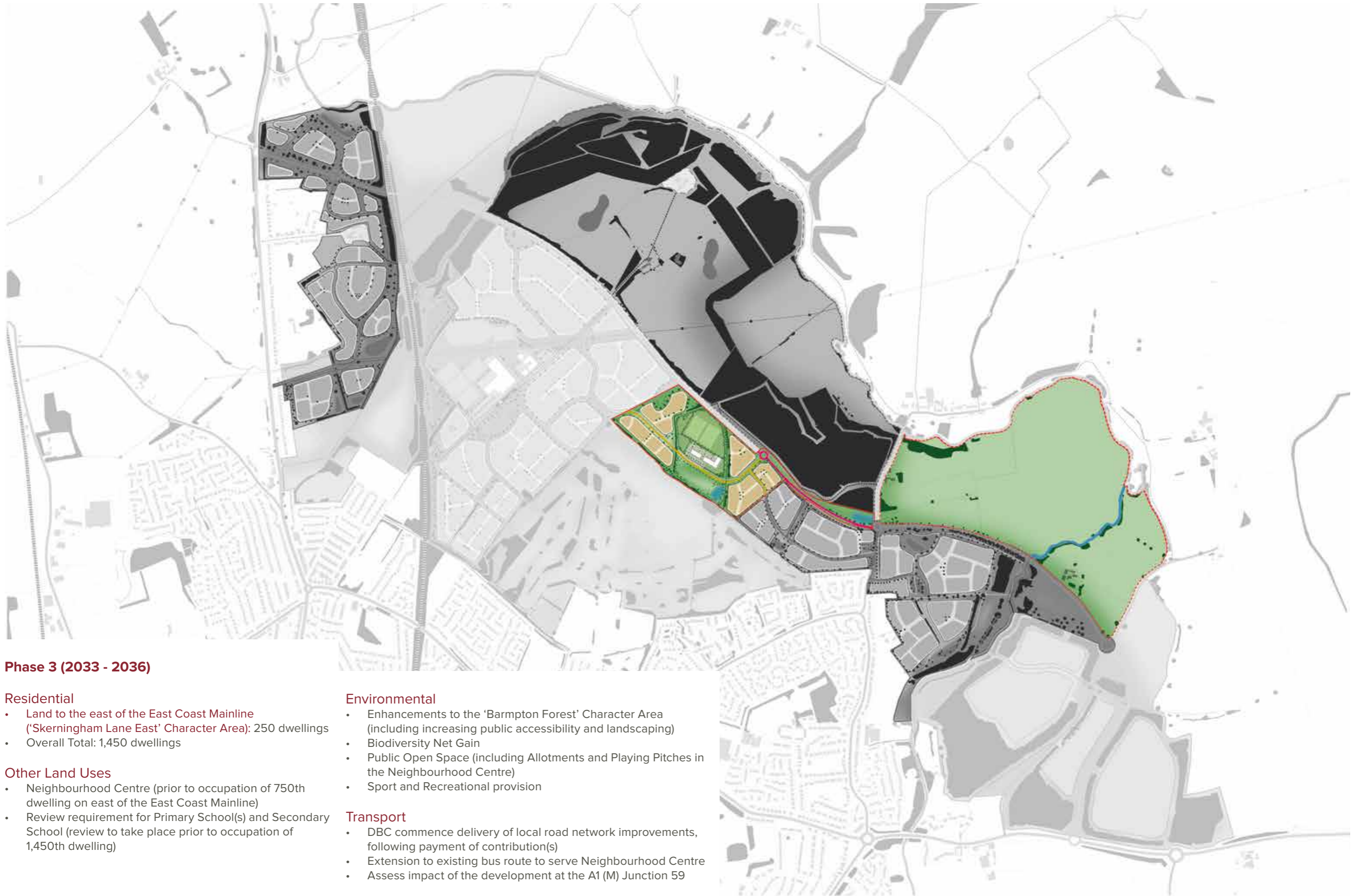
Land west of the East Coast Mainline:

- A167/Burtree Lane Junction Improvements delivered by DBC, following payment of contribution
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site (relating to the remaining 150 dwellings on land west of the East Coast Mainline)

Land east of the East Coast Mainline:

- Delivery of section of LDR between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site

Figure 7.2 Phase 2 Plan



Phase 3 (2033 - 2036)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' Character Area): 250 dwellings
- Overall Total: 1,450 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Neighbourhood Centre (prior to occupation of 750th dwelling on east of the East Coast Mainline)
- Review requirement for Primary School(s) and Secondary School (review to take place prior to occupation of 1,450th dwelling)

Environmental

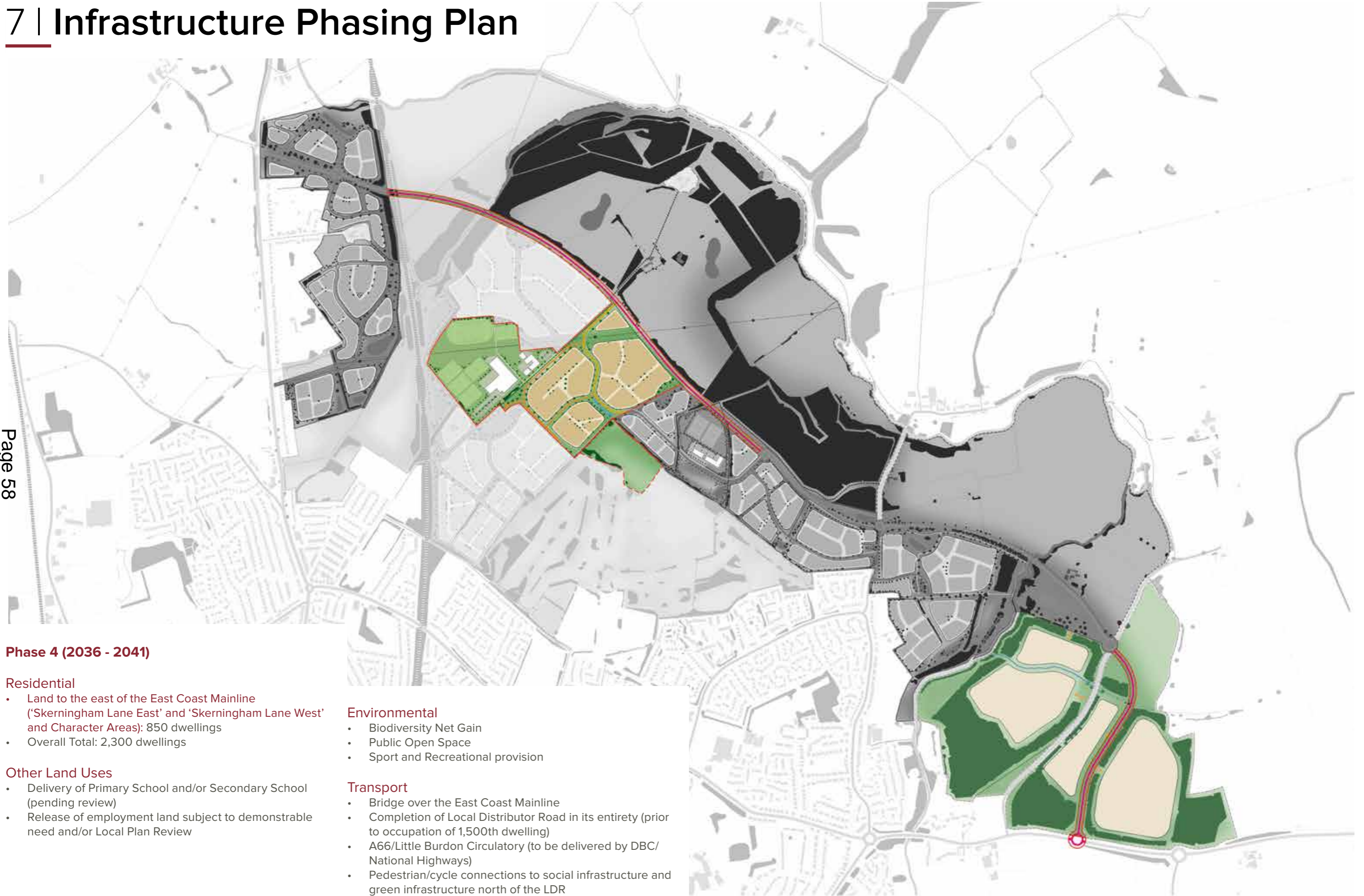
- Enhancements to the 'Barmpton Forest' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space (including Allotments and Playing Pitches in the Neighbourhood Centre)
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- DBC commence delivery of local road network improvements, following payment of contribution(s)
- Extension to existing bus route to serve Neighbourhood Centre
- Assess impact of the development at the A1 (M) Junction 59

Figure 7.3 Phase 3 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan



Phase 4 (2036 - 2041)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' and 'Skerningham Lane West' and Character Areas): 850 dwellings
- Overall Total: 2,300 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Delivery of Primary School and/or Secondary School (pending review)
- Release of employment land subject to demonstrable need and/or Local Plan Review

Environmental

- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- Bridge over the East Coast Mainline
- Completion of Local Distributor Road in its entirety (prior to occupation of 1,500th dwelling)
- A66/Little Burdon Circulatory (to be delivered by DBC/ National Highways)
- Pedestrian/cycle connections to social infrastructure and green infrastructure north of the LDR

Figure 7.4 Phase 4 Plan



Phase 5 (2041 - 2045)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane West' and Character Area): 750
- Overall Total: 3,050 dwellings

Environmental

- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- Vehicular access via secondary roads, connecting to primary roads delivered through earlier phases
- Pedestrian/cycle connections to social infrastructure and green infrastructure north of the LDR

Figure 7.5 Phase 5 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan

Phase 6 (2045 - 2050)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane West' and Character Area): 650 dwellings
- Overall Total: 3,700 dwellings

Environmental

- Enhancements to the 'Skerningham Woods' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- Vehicular access via secondary roads, connecting to primary roads delivered through earlier phases
- Pedestrian/cycle connections



Figure 7.6 Phase 6 Plan

8 | Conclusion

The Masterplan (including infrastructure phasing plan) addresses the requirements of Policy H 10 of the Darlington Local Plan – it informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development.

It also demonstrates how the development will achieve the vision and objectives identified for Skerningham.

The Masterplan has been shaped by joint working between Darlington Borough Council, Banks Property and Skerningham Estates Ltd, with the latter two being the lead developers of the development. It has also been prepared in consultation with the community and other stakeholders.

The Masterplan sets out a framework for the delivery of Skerningham and forms part of a suite of documents (including the adopted Local Plan and Design Code) which will ensure a high quality of development is achieved in line with the Garden City Principles.

The community infrastructure identified will be secured via Section 106 Legal Agreement and planning conditions as appropriate as part of the planning application process.

The delivery of the site is anticipated to be around 25 years and it will therefore exceed the current Local Plan period (which runs to 2036). Key infrastructure has been identified and is programmed within the various phases of development. Any further infrastructure required will be secured through the planning application process.

As the delivery of the site extends beyond the plan period (2036), it is appropriate to review the policy requirements and infrastructure requirements as part of any review of the Local Plan. A review of the Local Plan should also assess the need for the employment uses on land to the south east corner of the allocation.

The chart opposite provides a summary illustration of when the identified infrastructure will be delivered against the housing delivery and timeline of the development.

Given the timescales involved in building out the site, the Masterplan will be reviewed from time to time as circumstances necessitate.

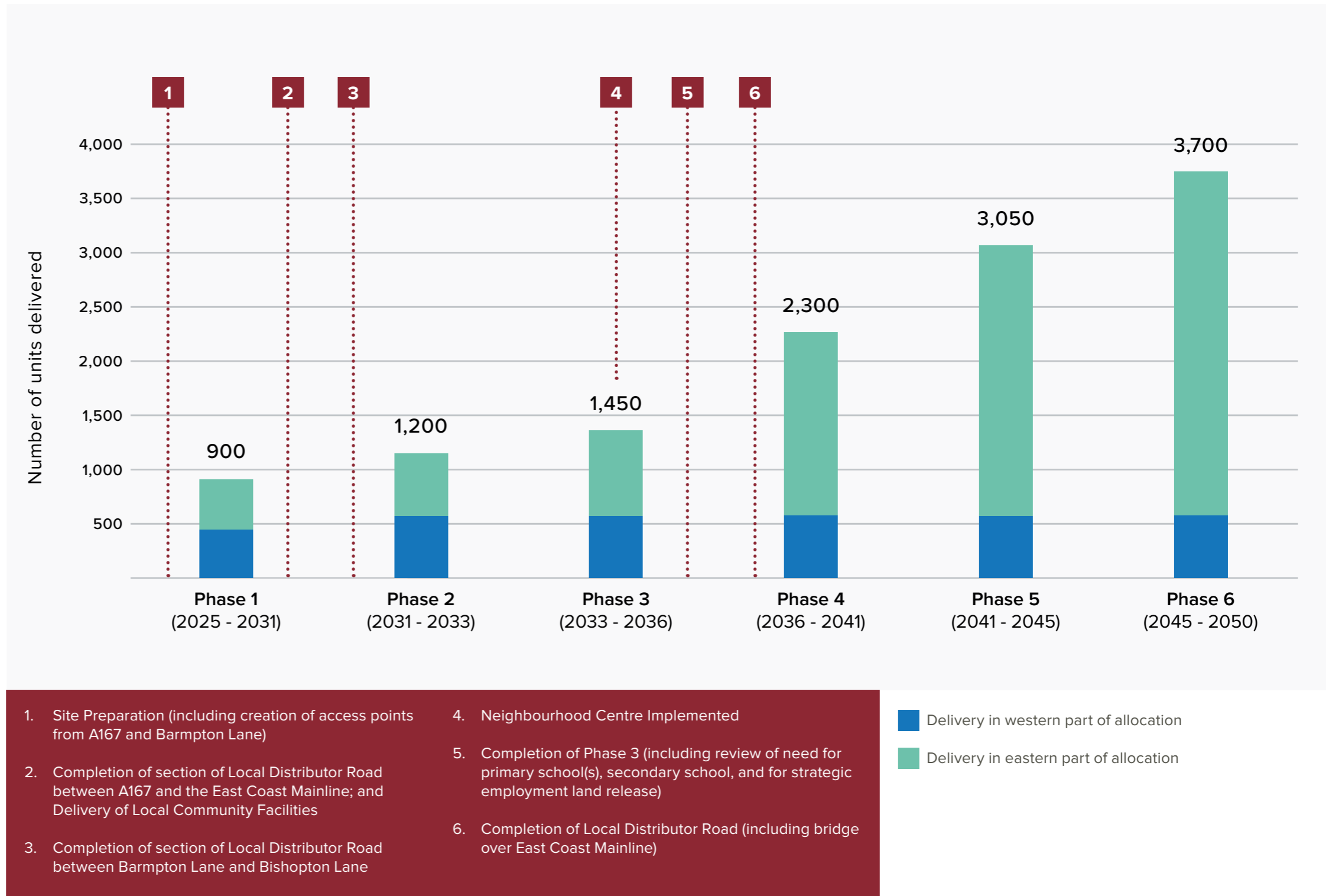


Figure 8.1: Delivery Trajectory

Skerningham Garden Village Statement of Community Involvement

**Report Following Consultation on the Draft
Comprehensive Masterplan**

Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Property

22 October 2024

LICHFIELDS

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2.0	The Process of Engagement	3
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (‘SCI’) has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of our client, Skerningham Estates Ltd, and Banks Property (‘the lead developers’), following the consultation to assist the preparation of the Comprehensive Masterplan for Skerningham Garden Village (also referred to as Skerningham).

Background

- 1.2 The Skerningham allocation is a 487 hectare site located to the north of Darlington. It will adjoin the existing communities at Beaumont Hill, Whinfield and Great Burdon. Barmpton Village is also located close to the north eastern edge of the site. The East Coast Mainline also runs through the western part of the site.
- 1.3 Banks Property is the lead developer for the land on the western part of the allocation, which includes land adjacent to the A167 and west of the East Coast Mainline. Skerningham Estates Ltd is the lead developer for the land to the east of the East Coast Mainline.
- 1.4 Policy H 10 Skerningham – Site Allocation (Strategic Policy), the policy most relevant to the allocation of the site, makes clear that a Comprehensive Masterplan including an Infrastructure Phasing Plan should be prepared by the applicant(s) prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site. It also states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code (which is prepared or led by the Darlington Borough Council (‘the Council’)).
- 1.5 The Design Code was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council on 28 September 2023. Its preparation was informed through various workshops with the local community and stakeholders and was subject to consultation between 9 September 2022 to 17 October 2022; and 9 December 2022 to 13 January 2023. This report concentrates on the consultation associated with the Comprehensive Masterplan.

Purpose of the Report

- 1.6 Following the introduction of the Government’s Localism Act in 2011, greater emphasis has been placed upon increased community involvement throughout the planning process.
- 1.7 Furthermore, the updated National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’), most recently in December 2023, promotes sustainable development through the creation of a high-quality built environment which reflects the community’s needs and wellbeing. The Framework states that early engagement in the planning process has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.
- 1.8 Paragraph 137 confirms that:
- 1.9 *“Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. **Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by***

their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

1.10 In consideration of the above, this SCI therefore sets out the consultation that has been undertaken in relation to the Comprehensive Masterplan, together with the feedback received and the response to the feedback.

Structure of the Report

1.11 The SCI is structured as follows:

- Section 2.0: outlines the consultation process and exercises which have been undertaken to ensure that the local community have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals;
- Section 3.0: presents the findings from the consultation exercise;
- Section 4.0: provides a response to the feedback received from the local community; and
- Section 5.0: summarises the findings and concludes the Statement.

2.0 The Process of Engagement

2.1 The lead developers have had regard to both the NPPF and the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out how Darlington Borough Council will involve the local community in the assessment of planning applications.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023

2.2 The NPPF identifies the role of local planning authorities in encouraging parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. Paragraph 39 states:

2.3 *Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.*

Community Engagement

2.4 Approximately 5,200 leaflets were distributed to the homes and businesses near the site between 25th and 30th October 2023. The leaflets advertised the online consultation website and the scheduled consultation events, held at the Dolphin Centre and Asda. A copy of the leaflet is included at Appendix 1.

2.5 The leaflets signposted respondents to a consultation website (www.skerningham.co.uk). This comprised a dedicated website for Skerningham Garden Village, providing general background information about the site and the proposals along with a copy of the document which could be downloaded. It also included an inbuilt questionnaire/feedback form. Screenshots from the website are included at Appendix 2.

2.6 The website which received 1,735 unique visitors. 215 no. of responses to the online survey were received. Analysis found that the majority of visitors arrived at the website either via social media (such as Facebook) or via the direct website address. Other visitors arrived at the website via Google and Darlington Borough Council's website.

2.7 The leaflet advertised a series of drop in consultation events at the Dolphin Centre (in the town centre) and Asda (located on Whinbush Way), providing a varied mix of locations around the Town.

 **Dolphin Centre, Horse Market, Darlington DL1 5RP, on:**
Wednesday 1st November 2023 (9am until 1pm)
Thursday 2nd November 2023 (12pm until 4pm)

 **ASDA, Whinbush Way, Darlington DL1 3RB, on:**
Monday 6th November 2023 (1pm until 5pm)
Tuesday 7th November 2023 (9am until 1pm)

- 2.8 Given the significance of Skerningham to the wider town, it was considered that the consultation events should include events held in an accessible venue within the town centre. Dolphin Centre was secured as a venue with events taking place during the Autumn school half term week in order to maximise the population demographic. The venue at Asda was selected as an accessible location closer to the Skerningham site.
- 2.9 The format of the events comprised a ‘drop-in’ style of consultation with display boards containing information on the proposals, which generally followed the structure of information on the consultation website. Paper copies of the questionnaire form, consistent with the survey questionnaire on the website, were available at the events, along with return boxes. Where space allowed, tables and chairs were also available to allow respondents an opportunity to complete paper copies of the questionnaire forms.

Figure 2.1 Photograph of the consultation event set up at Whessoe Parish Hall



- 2.10 In response to initial feedback received during the first week of events, two additional consultation events were arranged at Whessoe Parish Hall, on Monday 13th November 2023 (5pm until 8pm) and Wednesday 15th November 2023 (5pm until 8pm). The lead developers listened to the concerns raised in relation to the timing of the drop in sessions and offered the two final sessions during evening hours. Whessoe Parish Hall also provided an additional venue that was located close to the site.
- 2.11 The lead developers also extended the consultation period until 30th November 2023 in response to other concerns received. The additional events, and the extension to the

consultation period, were advertised via the consultation website and via posters at the remaining events.

2.12 Over the course of the consultation events, over 300 people attended the drop-in sessions. Attendance levels varied among the events with the majority of visitors attending the events held at Asda. By comparison, a relatively low number of people attended the events held at Whessoe Parish Hall.

2.13 In addition to the 215 questionnaire responses received via the website, questionnaire forms were also available to complete at each of the drop-in events. 27 completed response forms were received at the Asda events; 19 at the Dolphin Centre events; and 5 at the Whessoe Parish Hall events. It is noted that attendees at the drop-in events had the ability to complete the response form at an alternative time via the website.

2.14 Cognisant of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the project team took a decision to minimise the requested amount of personal data on the questionnaire forms (and website survey). Therefore, the responses were submitted anomalously.

Consultation Survey

2.15 The online survey, which was also available in paper format at the consultation events, included 5 closed questions and 2 open answer questions for respondents to expand on their views.

2.16 The structured questions were as follows:

- 1 **The Local Plan policy for the Skerningham (Policy H 10) states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should inform the mix of uses, layout, scale, design of the development at Skerningham. Do you generally agree that the draft Comprehensive Masterplan does this?** Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
- 2 **Policy H 10 also states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should inform the phasing of the development and the delivery of infrastructure. Do you generally agree that the draft Comprehensive Masterplan does this?** Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
- 3 **The Council adopted the Design Code as a Supplementary Planning Document on 28 September 2023, and held various workshops to inform its preparation in 2022. Were you aware of and/or did you participate in the preparation of the Design Code?** Yes/No
- 4 **Policy H 10 States that the Comprehensive Masterplan should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Council's Design Code. Do you generally agree that the draft Comprehensive Masterplan does this?** Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
- 5 **Do you consider that any further changes are needed before the Comprehensive Masterplan is finalised? If you select yes, you will be asked to describe your suggested changes.** Yes/No

2.17 The open answer questions were as follows:

- 1 **You answered Yes to the previous question (Question 5). Please describe your suggested changes in the space below.**
- 2 **If you have any further comments in relation to the draft Comprehensive Masterplan, please provide them in the space below.**

2.18 Analysis of the comment forms has been provided in the following sections. All comments returned by 30 November 2023 have been taken into account in this report.

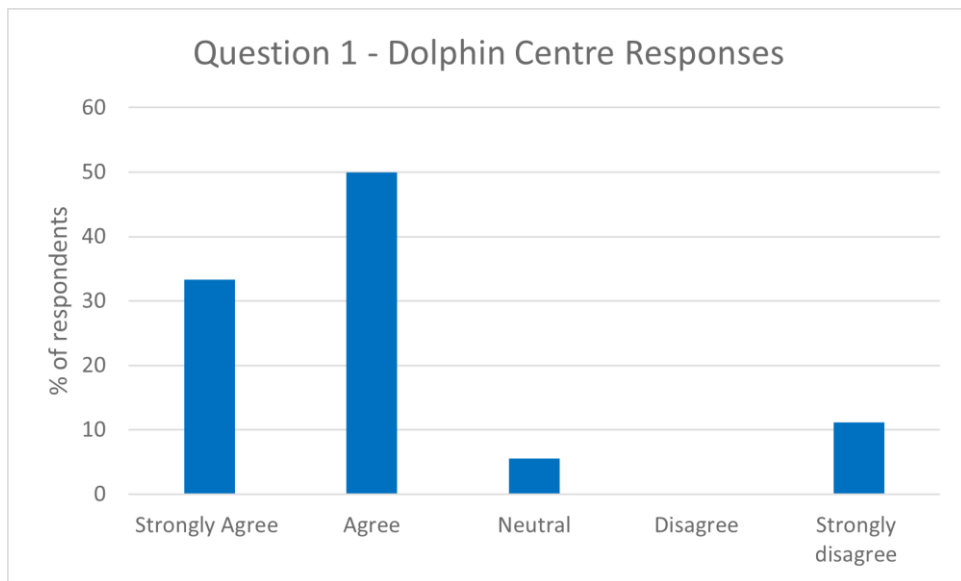
3.0 Findings from Consultation

- 3.1 The consultation comprised both an in person and online-based consultation event advertised via the leaflet drop as discussed earlier. The consultation website included an online survey to allow visitors an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals. The in-person events had physical copies of this questionnaire which could be returned to us via the comments box at the events.
- 3.2 The following completed responses were received:
- 215 via the consultation website
 - 19 in the comments return box at the two events held at the Dolphin Centre
 - 27 in the comments return box at the two events held at Asda
 - 5 in the comments return box at the two events held at Whessoe Parish Hall
- 3.3 A further 6 responses were received through other means, including responses sent directly to the Lichfields office, and correspondence sent to the Council (and subsequently then shared with Lichfields). It is noted that some of these responses duplicated responses received via the website. Correspondence has also been received from other site promoters/agents which has been considered in advance of the preparation of the updated Comprehensive Masterplan.
- 3.4 Around 12.4% of website visitors translated into survey responses which is a good proportion based on our experience. This said, the consultation has generated interest around the proposals in its responses. Other website visitors may have instead completed their responses in person at one of the 6 consultation events.
- 3.5 It should also be noted that no personal information was requested as part of the questionnaire response. Therefore, in theory, it would have been possible for respondents to submit more than one response to the consultation through the website and/or drop in events.
- 3.6 Notwithstanding this, the total 272 received responses to the consultation, when compared with the 5,200 leaflets that were distributed, equates to an overall response rate of 5.2% which reflects an overall modest level of interest from the local community.

Informs the mix of uses, layout, scale and design of development at Skerningham

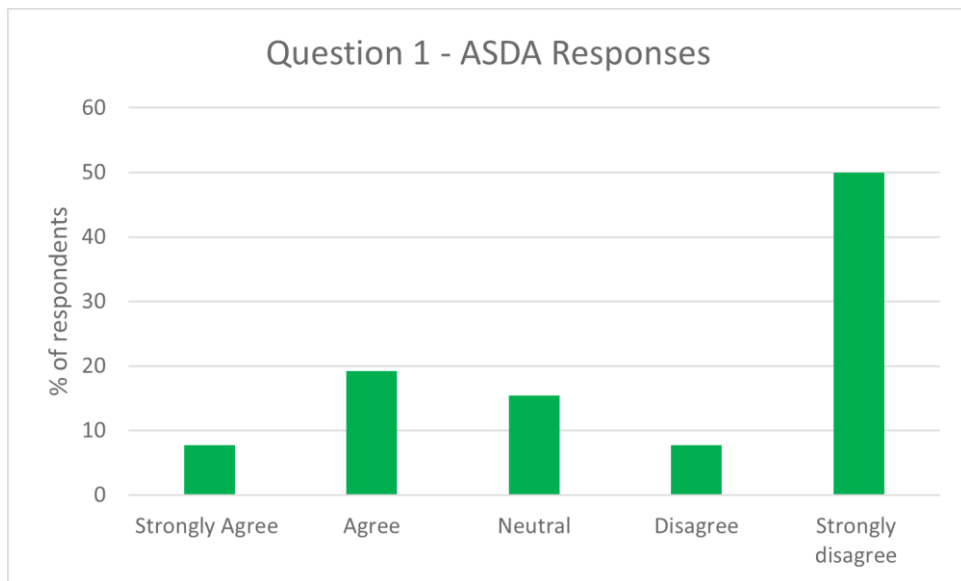
- 3.7 The respondents in Question 1 were asked their opinion on whether the Comprehensive Masterplan informs the mix of uses, layout, scale and design of the development at Skerningham.
- 3.8 The overall response to Question 1 is presented in Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 below:

Figure 3.1



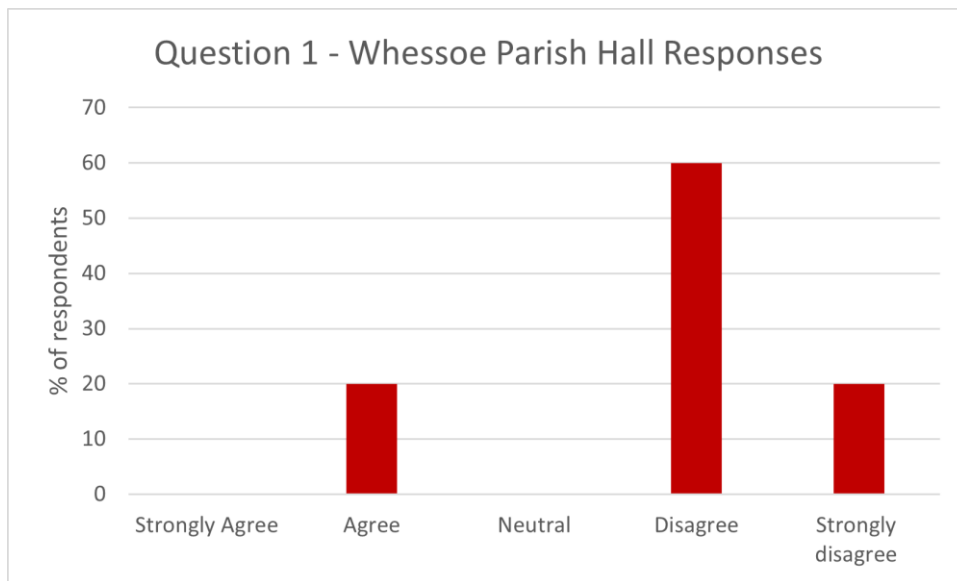
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.2



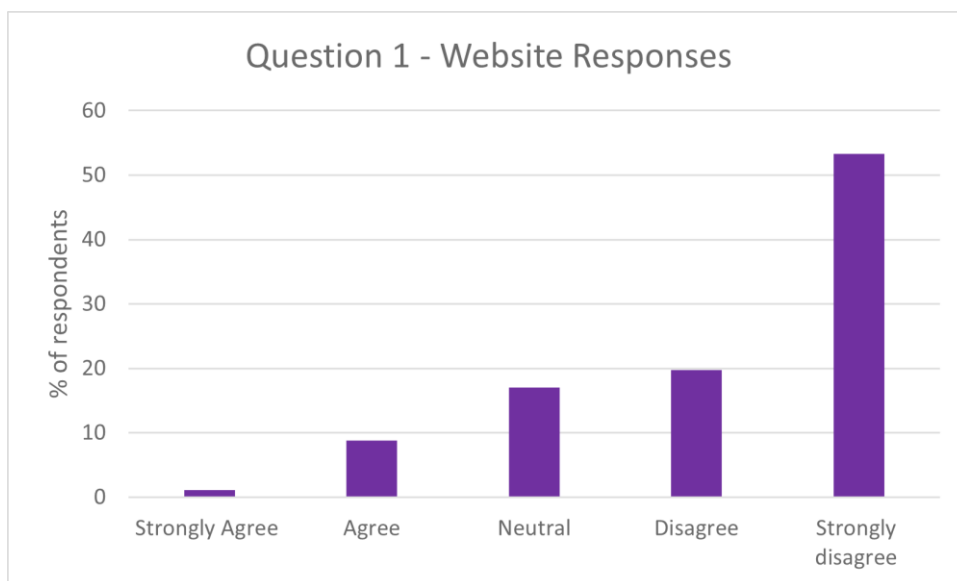
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.3



Source: Lichields Analysis

Figure 3.4



Source: Lichfields Analysis

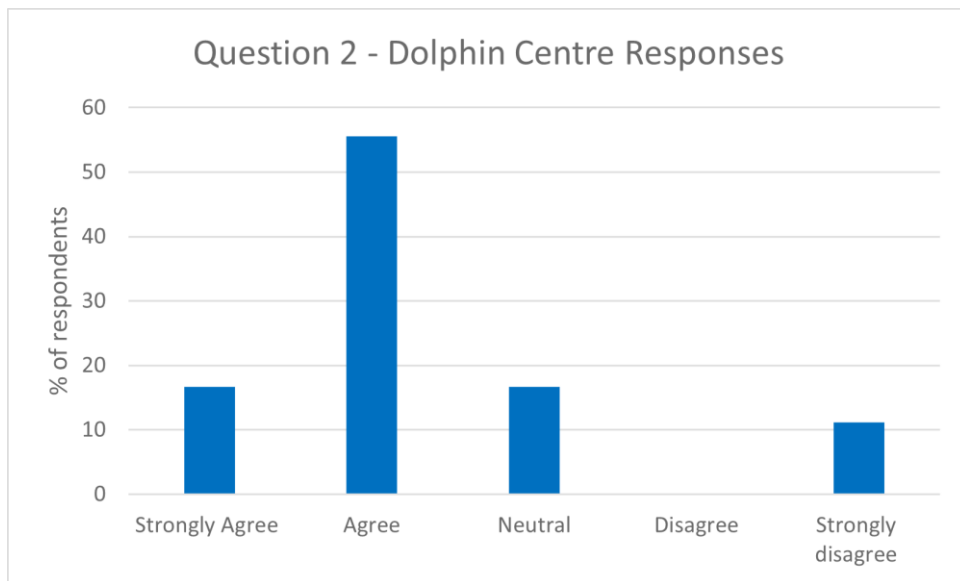
- 3.9 From the responses to Question 1, it is clear that there has been a mixed view from the respondents at different locations as to whether the Masterplan informs the mix of uses, layout, scale and design of the development.
- 3.10 For those at the Dolphin Centre, over 80% of respondents felt that the draft Masterplan informed these characteristics of the developments, compared to the other three consultation events where over 50% of those who completed the form either strongly disagreed or disagreed that the Masterplan does this.

Phasing of the development and the delivery of infrastructure

3.11 The respondents in Question 2 were asked whether they agree that the draft Comprehensive Masterplan informs them of the phasing of the development and the delivery of infrastructure onsite.

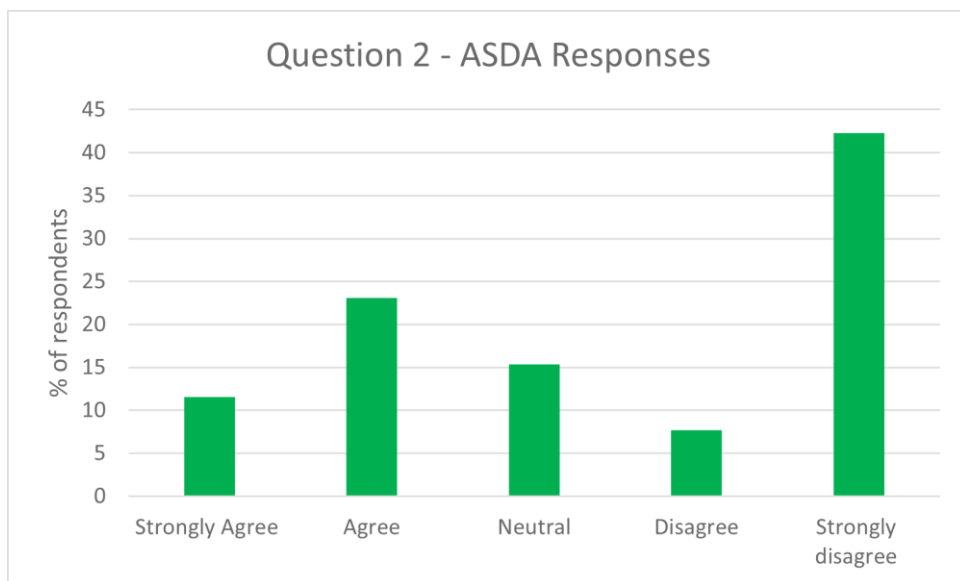
3.12 The overall response to Question 2 from each of the consultation events are in Figures 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 below:

Figure 3.5



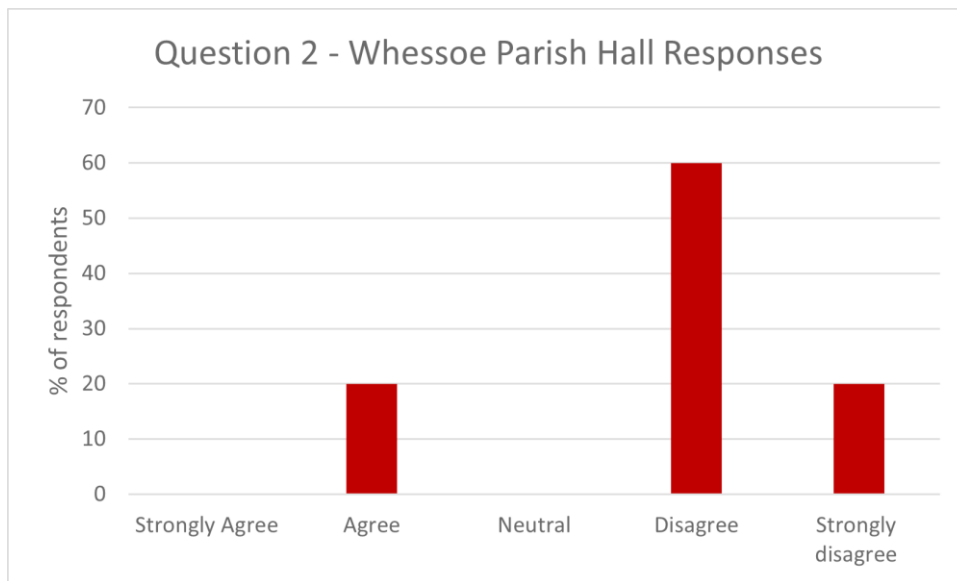
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.6



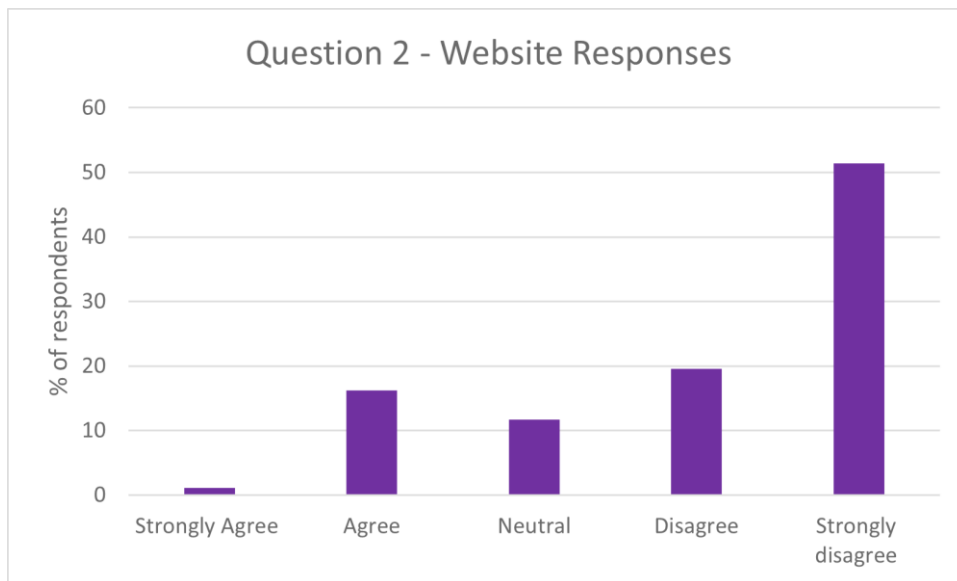
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.7



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.8



Source: Lichfields Analysis

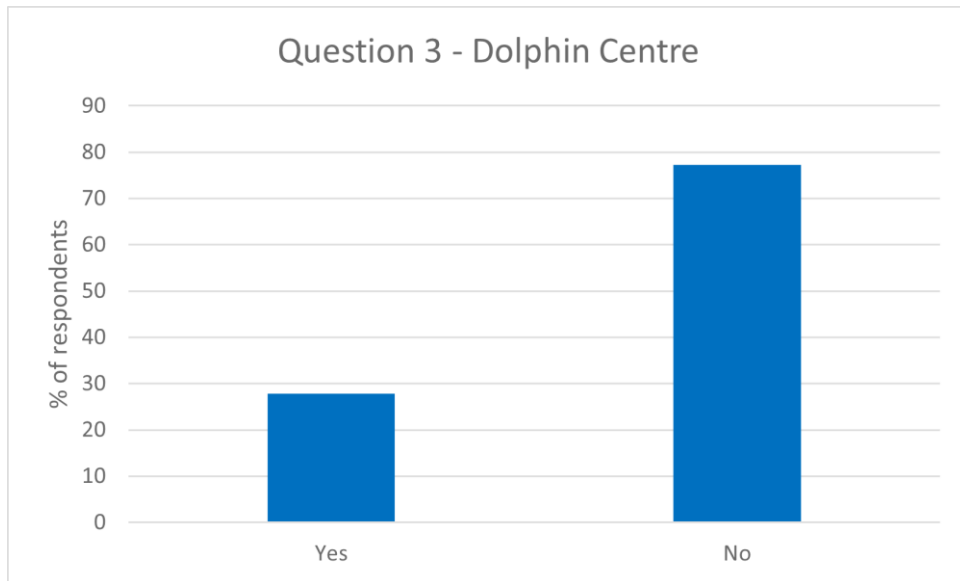
3.13 The outcome for Question 2 shows a mix of responses on how the public felt the Masterplan informed them on the phasing of infrastructure. At the Dolphin Centre, almost 90% of responses indicated that the Masterplan did this. At Asda, the responses were more even, with around half of responses strongly agreeing, agreeing or neutral on whether the Masterplan informed them on the phasing of infrastructure.

3.14 However, the responses received from the Whessoe Parish Hall events and through the consultation website show different opinions on how the Masterplan informed them on the delivery of infrastructure, as these both show over 70% of responses either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the Masterplan does this.

Design Code Workshops

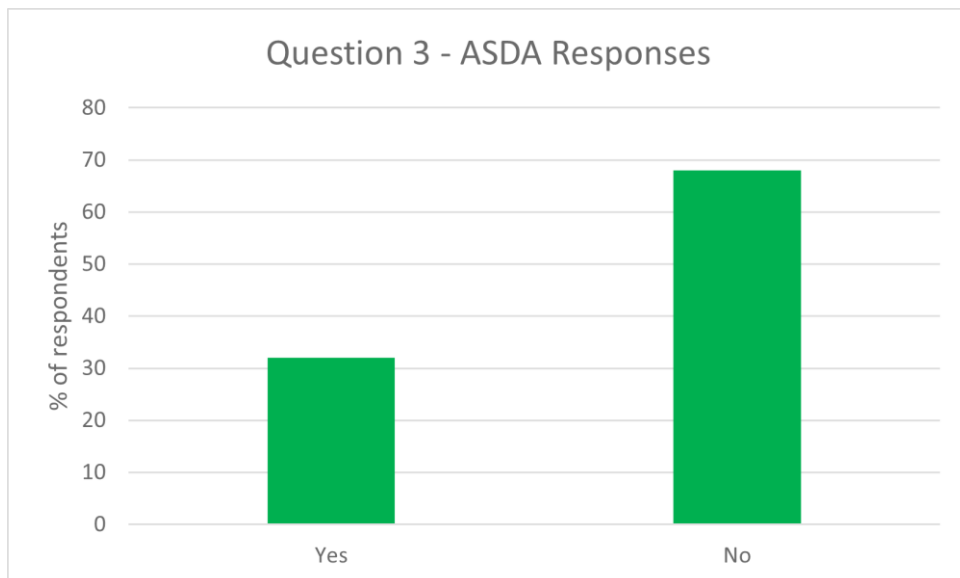
- 3.15 In Question 3 the respondents were asked whether they were aware of, or had participated in, the Design Code workshops, which were held between April 2022 and June 2002.
- 3.16 The overall responses to Question 3 from each of the events are in Figures 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12 below:

Figure 3.9



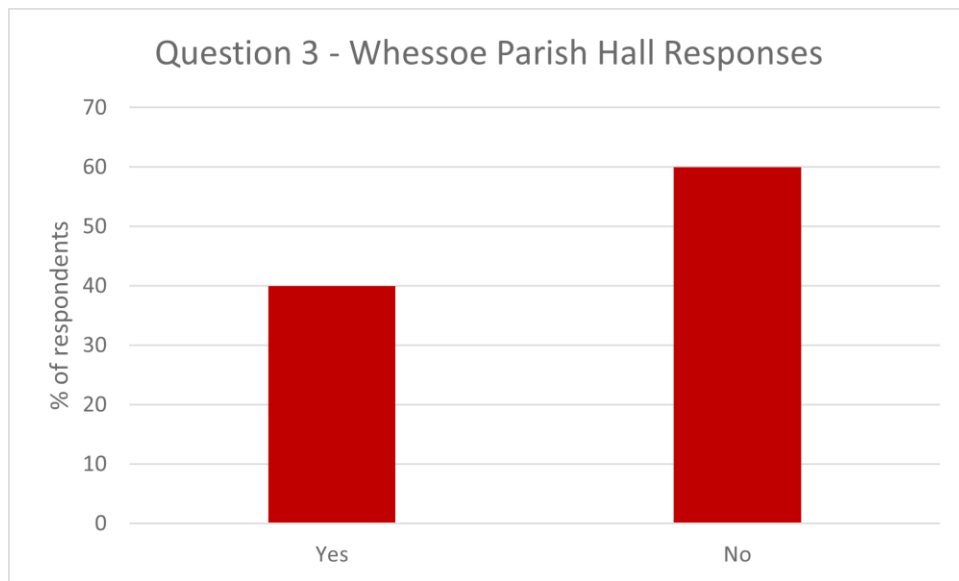
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.10



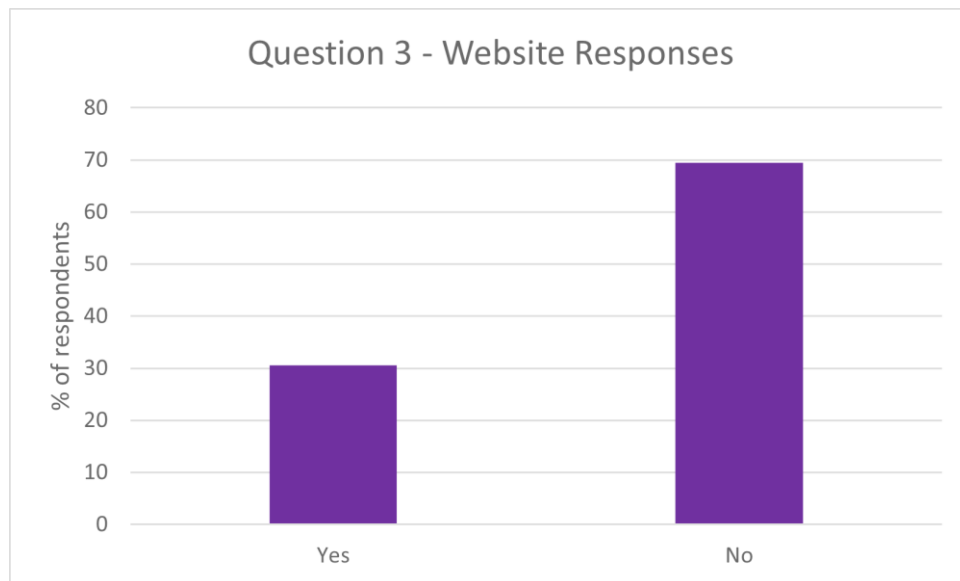
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.11



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.12



Source: Lichfields Analysis

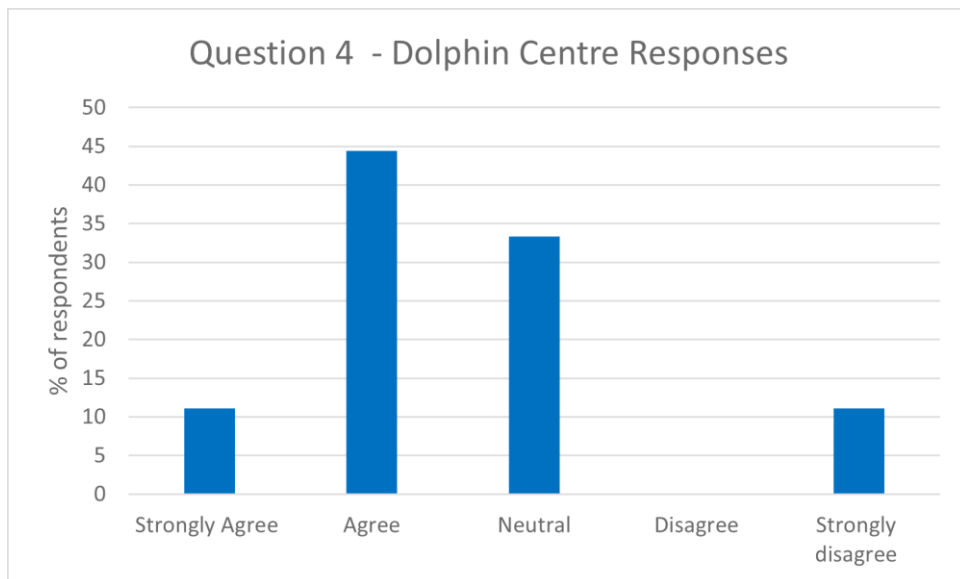
3.17 From each of the consultation events, it is clear that most of the people who responded did not attend the Design Code workshop events. However, for each event, a minimum of 30% of participants stated that they were either aware of, or had participated in, the Design Code workshops.

Is the Masterplan based on the Design Code?

3.18 In Question 4, respondents were asked whether they felt that the Comprehensive Masterplan was based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code, as required by Policy H 10.

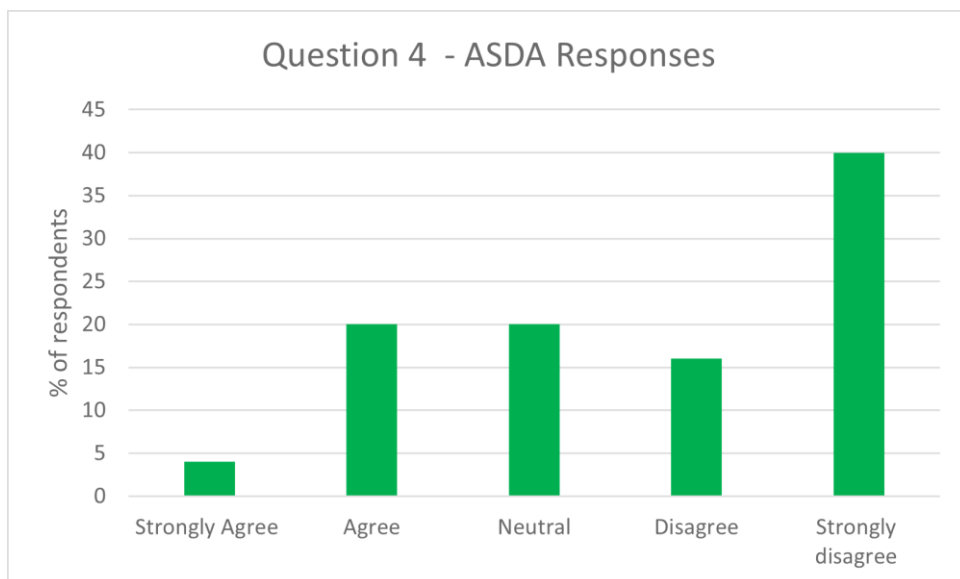
3.19 The findings from Question 4 are in Figures 3.13 – 3.16 below:

Figure 3.13



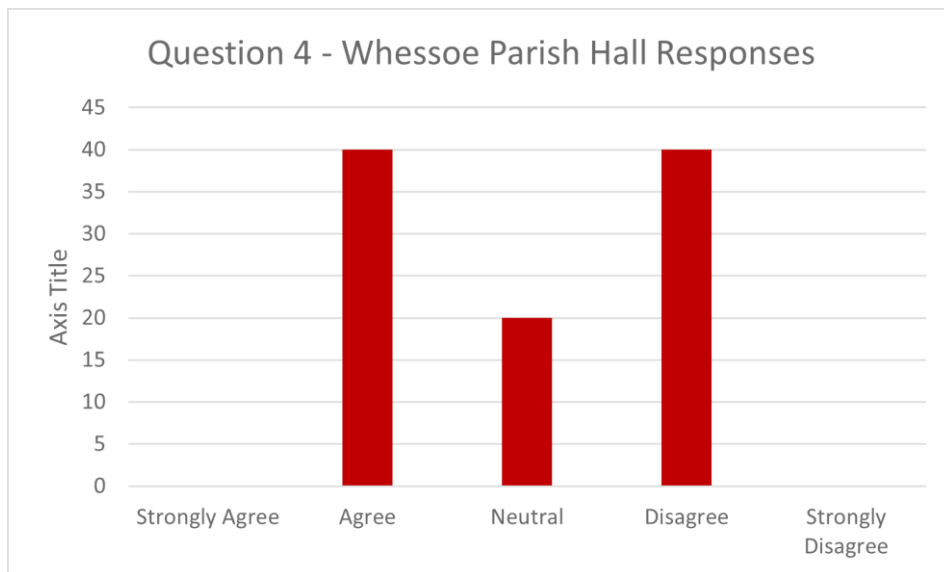
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.14



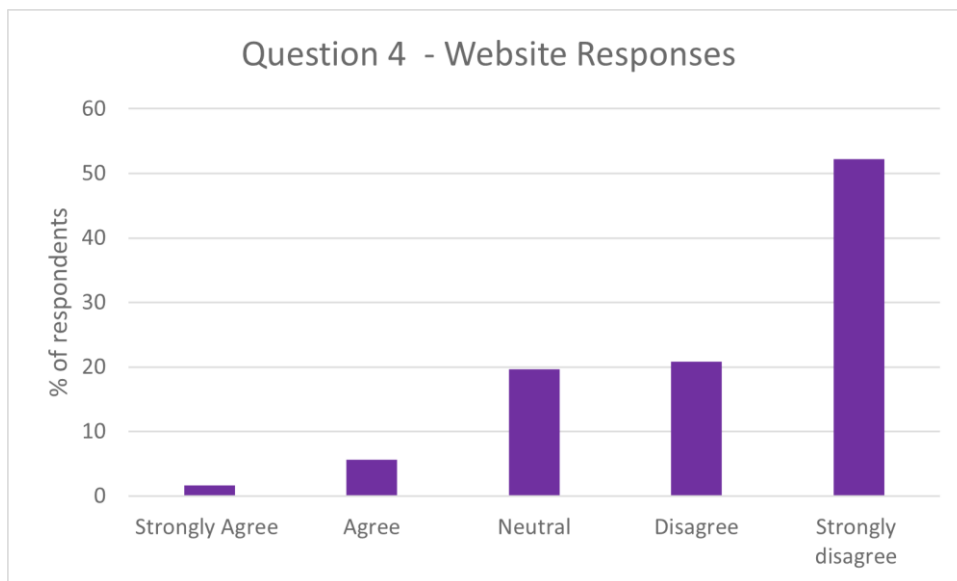
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.15



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.16



Source: Lichfields Analysis

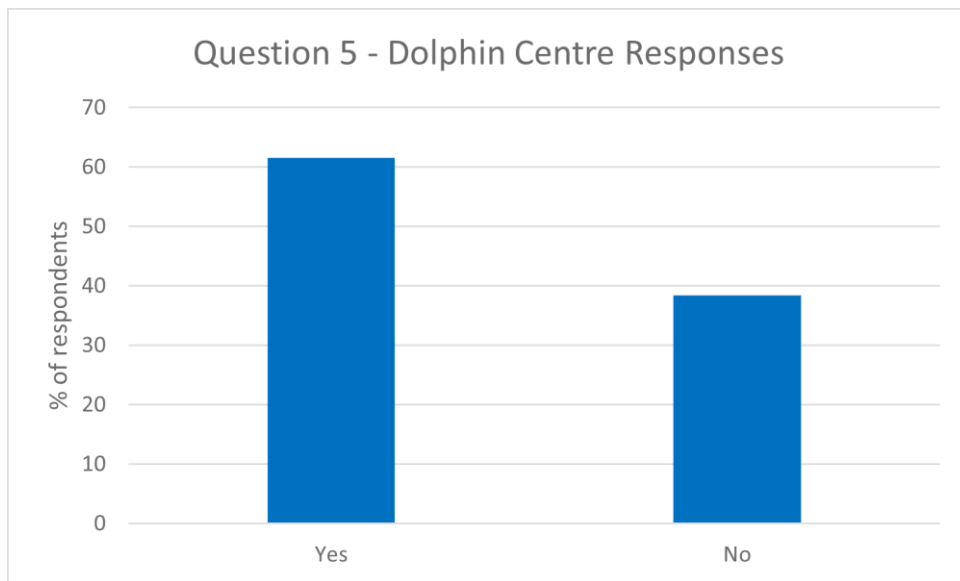
3.21 From the feedback for Question 4, the results demonstrate an overall neutral opinion on whether the Masterplan is based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code. The only event which was mostly negative on this matter was the Website Responses in Figure 3.16, which show over 70% of respondents felt that the Masterplan did not reflect the Design Code.

Any further changes

3.22 Question 5 asked a structured question on whether respondents felt any further changes to the Masterplan were needed. If they selected ‘Yes’ they were given the opportunity to expand of this. The comments from this are analysed later on in this report.

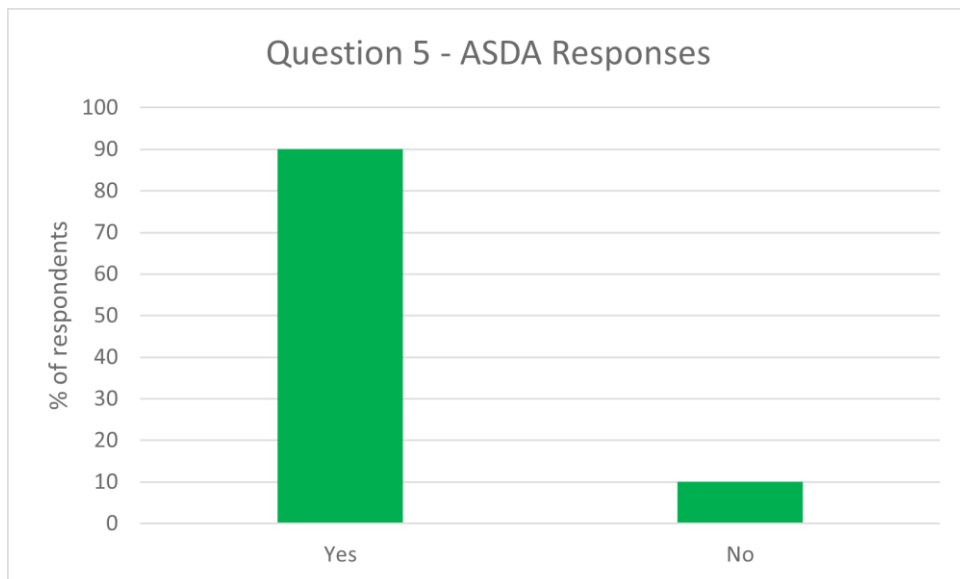
3.23 The findings from Question 5 are shown in Figures 3.17-3.20:

Figure 3.17



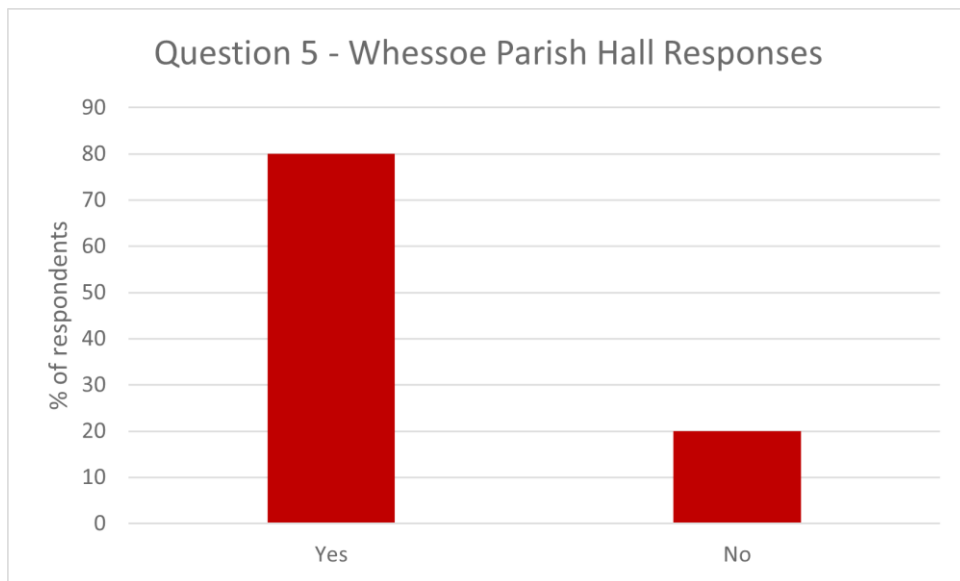
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.18



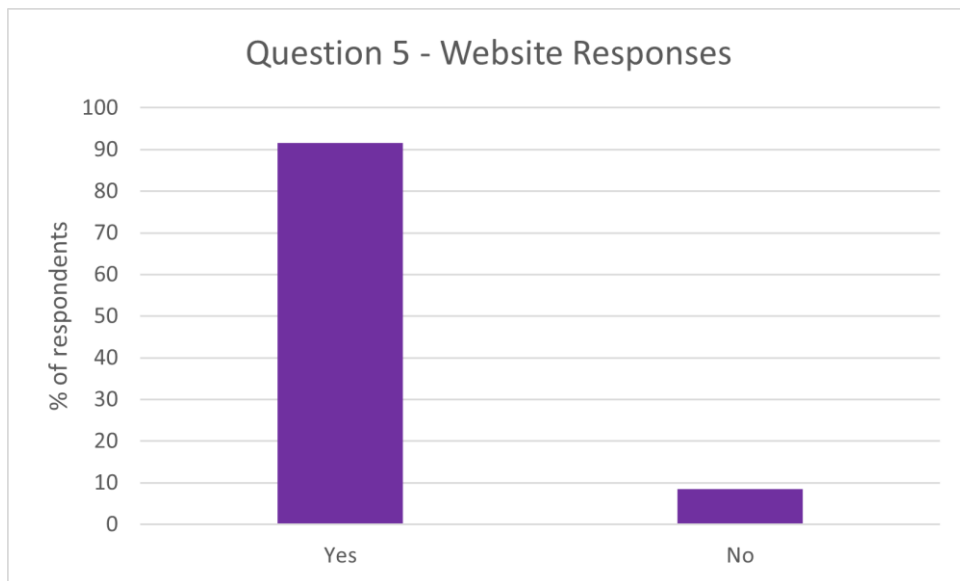
Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.19



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Figure 3.20



Source: Lichfields Analysis

3.24 At each event it is clear that the majority of participants felt that there were further points to be considered for the Masterplan. Those who responded 'Yes' to this question have left comments and these will be analysed below.

Comments – Question 6: Proposed Further Changes

3.25 Suggestions for further changes from the Dolphin Centre events included:

“Need to build flood defences downstream on the river Skerne. Currently (1st November 2023) we are flooded around Springfield area and others”.

“Ensure that more affordable homes are in the plan”.

“Areas of space for people to self-build more unique designs”.

“This scheme needs to have CLEAR and DELIVERABLE solution to drainage and Water management to reduce the risk of flooding existing residential and town centre areas”.

3.26 Other suggestions were proposed from the ASDA events:

“We need to know the infrastructure outline to understand how the development affects existing residents and their existing roads etc will be affected”.

“There is a need for 1/2-bedroom homes and adaptable homes more than the mix of homes in the plan”.

“Access to development is too restricted and will have a devastating effect on surrounding residential areas i.e Brampton Lane”.

3.27 At the Whessoe Parish Hall event, further changes were also proposed, including:

“There is no consideration for the amount of traffic already using Brampton lane, Whinbush Way & Whinfield Rd. The New estates will only compound the existing problem”.

“The plan should not allow for 2 to 3 storey buildings behind the existing bungalows in Galloway”.

“A new access road from Great Burdon roundabout should be provided before any development of the Skerningham area is even considered”.

3.28 The website consultation also generated a range of responses to this question:

“Where are the GP surgeries and dentists to support your health hub? There is not enough provision already for Darlington residents without adding extra pressure. Surely you cannot state this is a health hub without adding these services?”

“Ensure there are plenty of green areas are left. Traffic is elsewhere than barmpton Lane. Safety for children and people with animals with traffic. Conserve skerningham woods for the public.”

“The link road and bridge across the ECML should be completed at an earlier phase to alleviate traffic congestion.”

“There is no obvious consideration as to health care provision. There is mention of a health hub supported by existing providers.”

“The school should be the first building followed by the health hub and community building.”

“Whinfield is known for its 2-bedroom homes so this should be a priority. Too many 3 and 4 bedroom houses are being built which neglects to recognise the first time buyers forced into private rented properties which are not fit for purpose.”

“There is Inadequate information available on how traffic and road noise will be controlled. The new road supplying the garden village will pass through an area of local beauty favoured by walkers. The planners should consider a 20-mph limit through the fields/woodland as well as planting trees either side of the road to suppress the noise.”

“The woodland should not be destroyed.”

“Barmpton Lane alterations – need to have a cycle lane on at least one side, preferably both, to encourage sustainable travel and minimise increased traffic.”

Comments – Question 7: Any further comments

3.29 A summary of further comments from the events include:

“the roundabout proposed to the north of Galloway should be removed as this will only lead to further congestion on Barmpton Lane”

“Do we require this amount of housing? “

“Think overall this is a good idea for the area as long as it keeps some natural space for wildlife etc also to support play etc with children an accessible footpaths.”

“I am all for any Development that improves the North End of Darlington.”

“Very worried about the impact of this on flooding especially in the Red Hall / Haughton area.”

“Well thought out., consideration given to green, space environment and traffic flow, a community rather than an estate.”

“Any new build has specifications of sustainable transport legislation must force local councils to retain bus services.”

“Government guidelines state 'a garden village' will need is own access without impact to other roads and infrastructure. Most houses will have two-three cars adding to pollution and health risks.”

“flooding will increase and emergency services will be under further pressure.”

“Wildlife will be pushed out of there natural habitat. Terrible, completely disagree with plans.”

“Why build lots of high value houses when in Darlington ,it's social housing that is needed and affordable housing.”

“The new development already being built at Beaumont hill is already causing considerable disruption and congestion.”

3.30 These comments and concerns have been analysed to identify any commonly cited topics and/or areas of concern. Section 4.0 provides a comprehensive response by the project team to these.

4.0 Responding to the Feedback

4.1 The unstructured comments have been analysed and, whilst there were comments of support for the proposal, key topics of interest and concerns have been grouped together into the following themes:

- 1 Principle of Development
- 2 Highways
- 3 Flooding and Ecological Concerns
- 4 Pressures on Social Infrastructure
- 5 Land east of the River Skerne
- 6 Phasing of Development

4.2 Each of the topics have been considered by the project team. They are addressed in sequence below and where possible, the project team has sought to provide further clarity.

The Principle of Development

4.3 A common theme in the comments was question for the need for the number of houses being built in the area. Comments included:

“Do we require this amount of housing?”

“Why build lots of high value houses when in Darlington, it’s social housing that is needed and affordable housing.”

“Whinfield is known for its 2-bedroom homes so this should be a priority. Too many 3- and 4-bedroom houses are being built which neglects to recognise the first-time buyers forced into private rented properties which are not fit for purpose.”

4.4 Policy H2 of the Darlington Local Plan provides details of sites and numbers of houses which are deliverable for the Council to meet its rolling 5-year housing land supply. These allocations use a variety of brownfield and greenfield sites and will provide an appropriate mix of residential developments. As part of these allocations, Policy H 2 includes Skerningham, allocated for 1650 houses by 2036 and another 2850 houses post-2036.

4.5 The Comprehensive Masterplan includes a Delivery Trajectory (Figure 8.1) on page 33, which was based on achieving the assumptions in the Local Plan that 1,650 dwellings would be delivered by the end of the plan period (2036). The Design Code and Comprehensive Masterplan have taken longer than anticipated to prepare, and it has been necessary to review the Delivery Trajectory (now on page 37) in the updated Comprehensive Masterplan. As a result of the slippage in timescales, the development is now anticipated to deliver 1,450 dwellings within the plan period, although this is not regarded as a cap. This update also has implications for the phasing of the development, as explained later in this section of the report.

4.6 Policy H 10 is the strategic site policy for Skerningham and details the requirements that need to be considered in order to bring the site forward. This includes the preparation of a Design Code and Masterplan to inform the development.

- 4.7 Although there were several comments which questioned the need for the number and types of housing in Darlington, the principle of development on the site has already been established and assessed by the Council, as it is allocated in Policy H 2. Furthermore, Policy H 10 details the way the Masterplan needed to be set out and influenced by the Design Code and therefore the proposed number and type of dwellings are considered acceptable under these policies.
- 4.8 Part of the objection to the principle of development was ‘building on the green belt’, which was mentioned in a few instances in the comments page section. However, it is necessary to clarify that no land within Darlington, or indeed the Tees Valley, is designated as Green Belt. Furthermore, the site is allocated for development under Policies H 2 and H 10.
- 4.9 Overall, the principle of development onsite is within the scope of these policies and therefore acceptable for the site to progress to a planning application.

Highways

- 4.10 From the consultation events, a number of comments received were based on concerns on the impact the development will have on the current highway infrastructure.
- 4.11 Comments included:
- “We need to know the infrastructure outline to understand how the development affects existing residents and their existing roads etc will be affected”.*
- “Access to development is too restricted and will have a devastating effect on surrounding residential areas i.e Barmpton Lane”.*
- “Government guidelines state 'a garden village' will need its own access without impact to other roads and infrastructure. Most houses will have two-three cars adding to pollution and health risks.”*
- “Any new build has specifications of sustainable transport legislation must force local councils to retain bus services.”*
- 4.12 A large proportion of concerns on transport matters related to the use of Barmpton Lane for access to the site. These concerns generally related to whether Barmpton Lane would have suitable capacity for HGVs and traffic for the development. The comments suggested that other access options for the development.
- 4.13 Policy H 10 (g iii) states:
- Development of the initial phases of development on the eastern part of the allocation will be accessed via Barmpton Lane and/or Bishopton Lane. Prior to the occupation of between the 200th and 450th dwelling on the eastern part of the allocation the section of the local distributor road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane shall be delivered.*
- 4.14 The Masterplan identifies that Phase 1, on land in the eastern part of the allocation, would be accessed off Barmpton Lane. This is consistent with the above extract from Policy H 10.
- 4.15 Other highways concerns queried when the full length of the Local Distributor Road would be completed, to help alleviate what respondents felt was already high levels of congestion. The Masterplan (at Section 7) clearly identifies the phased delivery of the Local Distributor

Road in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of Policy H 10 (g). A response to this query is also included in Appendix 3 to this report.

- 4.16 Comments were also noted on the importance of suitable public transport services. In relation to the concerns raised around public transport, Policy H 10 (e) emphasises how the development should include sustainable transport modes. The Masterplan proposes a public transport route to serve the development, with multiple stops to help residents and the wider community access different parts of the site. The Masterplan also establishes the provision of active travel routes which seek to maximise the opportunities for walking and cycling through the development, to connections and destinations off site. This is also consistent with an objective in the Design Code, including the ambition to achieve 20 minute neighbourhoods.
- 4.17 Since the consultation on the Masterplan ended, the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) announced proposals and funding for the Darlington Northern Relief Road (DNRR). The Masterplan has been updated to acknowledge this update and to state that progress associated with the DNRR project will be kept under review to ensure that the delivery of Skerningham would not prejudice the delivery of the DNRR and vice versa.
- 4.18 In line with these points and how the Masterplan has been designed to meet the transport requirements as set out in Policy H 10, it is considered that the proposal meets this policy and the highways concerns of residents can be mitigated.

Flooding and Ecological Concerns

- 4.19 Ecological and drainage concerns were also a concern in the comments from participants. Comments included:

“The woodland should not be destroyed.”

“Wildlife will be pushed out of there natural habitat”

“flooding will increase and emergency services will be under further pressure.”

- 4.20 The majority of concerns raised for ecology and drainage issues related to the loss of green space and how this could increase the risk of flooding. Consistent with both local and national planning policy, any planning application for development at the site will be accompanied by a flood risk assessment, which will fully assess the suitability of the site and the risk of flooding from all potential sources. As a general principle, the area to the north and east of the site, adjacent to the River Skerne will be not form part of the developed area of the site. Furthermore, in line with Policy H 10, the site will need to provide sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to help mitigate any potential for the site to flood.
- 4.21 Furthermore, with the addition of SUDS on the site, as well as the requirement to deliver a net gain in accessible woodland for the local community, it is considered that the Masterplan is in accordance with Policy H 10 and will help protect the development from the impacts of heavy rainfall.
- 4.22 In terms of the wider ecological impacts of developing the site, there is a requirement to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and therefore it will boost the ecological value of the area.

Features such as SUDS will help to deliver areas where a range of species can thrive, and this will help meet the net gain statistics as well as defend against flooding.

Pressures on Social Infrastructure

- 4.23 There were a range of comments that were focused on the delivery of services and facilities as required by the Garden Village status of the project. These included:
- “The school should be the first building followed by the health hub and community building.”*
- “There is no obvious consideration as to health care provision. There is mention of a health hub supported by existing providers.”*
- 4.24 As the comments above show, the timely delivery of services and facilities for Skerningham is another theme which arose during the consultation events. As part of the allocation policy for Skerningham (H 10), numerous facilities have to be delivered in accordance with an Infrastructure Delivery Phasing Plan. The Masterplan, which includes a phasing plan, demonstrates the range of facilities which would come forward as part of the Garden Village.
- 4.25 The Masterplan demonstrates the timely delivery of the local community facilities to support the initial phase of development in Phase 1, in locations that are generally consistent with those shown in the adopted Local Plan. It also explains the context relating to the timescales associated with the provision of primary and secondary schools, as well as the location and proposed time frame of the neighbourhood centre/health hub. Although respondents felt like these should be delivered earlier than when the phasing plan suggests, there is a need to consider a longer term view on the delivery of the site and to ensure that the development will meet the requirements of Policy H10 (b), which requires a *centrally* located Neighbourhood Centre. The approach taken is also consistent with where the supporting services and facilities are indicated to be located in Figure 6.2 of the Local Plan.

Land east of the River Skerne

- 4.26 Some of the comments received included queries in relation to the land to the eastern area of the allocation, located between the River Skerne and the A1150. This area of the site is identified in the Masterplan as a later phase of the development. The comments received made reference to the uncertainty regarding its proposed land use, and also the proposed section of the Local Distributor Road through this part of the site.
- 4.27 Dealing with the land use matter first, the adopted Local Plan (paragraph 6.10.9) states:
- “The site promoters have indicated that the site has the potential to provide between 15-30 hectares of employment land on the south eastern corner of the site close to the A66 Little Burdon roundabout. However, this land was not assessed as part of the most recent Employment Land Review process and the Plan already makes sufficient provision for the employment needs of the borough over the Plan period on existing employment sites and new allocations, such as Central Park, Ingenium Parc and Greater Faverdale. The need to release this part of the Skerningham site for employment uses will be considered when the Local Plan is next reviewed, and as part of any future update/review of the Council’s employment land evidence base.”*

4.28 Page 111 of the Design Code states:

“Business uses may be suitable, subject to employment land needs and take up during the lifespan of the development, to be assessed as part of a review of the Local Plan.

Supporting local facilities are to be provided in support of either employment or residential uses given the relative distance from the existing Whinfield neighbourhood, depending what facilities are provided in the adjacent Barmpton Lane character area’.

4.29 It is a requirement of the Comprehensive Masterplan to be consistent with Policy H 10 and the principles established in the Design Code. In light of this, the presentation of this area of the allocation has been amended on the Masterplan (Figure 4.3) and on the Land Use Plan (Figure 4.8). The phasing plans in Section 7.0 have also been amended to show the potential delivery of this land from Phase 4 onwards. The Comprehensive Masterplan does not prejudice the final decision on the land use for this area of the allocation, which will be assessed during the review of the Local Plan.

4.30 There is also text in the Comprehensive Masterplan which makes clear that the document will need to be reviewed from time to time, in the context that the development will take several decades to complete. As such, this allows time to consider the appropriate land use for the area of the site to the east of the River Skerne.

Phasing of Development

4.31 The comments received on this matter generally relate to the phasing of the development on the eastern part of the allocation. Policy H 10 is very clear in describing the initial phases of the development will be located on land adjoining Barmpton Lane. It is also important to recognise that, alongside the allocation of the Skerningham in the Darlington Local Plan, Skerningham is also a designated Garden Village, which further emphasises the need to deliver a new community and sense of place. The need to deliver a sustainable new community has strongly influenced the phasing which works towards the delivery of the centrally located Neighbourhood Centre (as required by Policy H 10 (b)) as soon as practically possible within the development. This has also been informed through discussions with the local bus operators, who have confirmed that it is possible to extend the No. 10 service to serve Phase 1 (on Barmpton Lane), and then extend again in subsequent phases to serve the Neighbourhood Centre. This is viewed as being important to instil sustainable travel choices at an early stage of the development.

4.32 It is recognised that Policy H 10 (g) requires the completion of the Local Distributor Road (between the A167 and A1150) prior to the occupation of between the 900th and 1500th dwelling. The modelling work undertaken indicates that this requirement will be at the upper end of the range.

4.33 As explained in paragraph 4.5, it has been appropriate to review the assumptions relating to the quantum of development in light of the time it has taken to prepare the Design Code and the Comprehensive Masterplan. The reduction from 1,650 to 1,450 dwellings within the plan period results in a small change to the phasing of infrastructure. Based on this trajectory, the need for the completion of the Local Distributor Road would fall within Phase 4, rather than Phase 3. This also coincides with the potential timescale for delivery of development on land east of the River Skerne.

- 4.34 In response to the feedback received, additional text has been included at the start of Section 7 (Infrastructure Phasing Plan) of the Masterplan, to explain the approach taken to the phasing of the development. It is considered that this additional provides a helpful introduction to this part of the document.

Changes to the Masterplan

- 4.35 Changes to the Comprehensive Masterplan have been made in response to the comments received. These are summarised at Appendix 3 in more detail, along with the theme of the comments in which they response too.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion

5.1 This report has summarised the consultation undertaken by Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Property (the Lead Developers), in relation to the preparation of the Comprehensive Masterplan for Skerningham Garden Village.

5.2 The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the revised NPPF (2023) and the Darlington Borough Council Local Plan.

5.3 To engage with the community, around 5,200 number of leaflets were distributed to the local area, directing to a website with an online survey. The website received 1,735 unique visitors and the online survey received 215 responses by 30 November 2023. There were also 6 consultation events, held at 3 different venues across Darlington, where there were over 200 participants who attended. From these events, 51 questionnaires were completed. As explained in Section 3, a further 6 responses were received via other routes resulting in a total of 272 responses to the consultation.

5.4 When compared with the 5,200 leaflets that were distributed equates to an overall response rate of 5.2% which reflects an overall modest level of interest from the local community.

5.5 A summary of the findings are as follows:

- The completed responses were submitted anonymously, although the data gained from the events held at the Dolphin Centre, in the town centre, demonstrate a stronger positive reaction to the draft Masterplan when compared to the responses received at the 2 venues which are closer to the site.
- There was a mix of responses from the different venues in relation to whether the Masterplan successfully shows a mix of uses, layout, scale and design of the development, with the feedback generally more positive at the Dolphin Centre events, than the other two events and the website survey.
- Respondents were also asked whether the Masterplan explained the infrastructure delivery and phasing for the site. The responses received through the Dolphin Centre and Asda events showed a balance of opinions on this topic. However, at Whessoe Parish Hall and on the website consultation, over 70% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. In response to this feedback, additional text has been added to the start of Section 7 to explain the approach that has been taken to the phasing and infrastructure delivery.
- The three in person events were more balanced on whether the Masterplan reflected the principles within the Design Code. However, findings from the website survey showed that over 70% of respondents felt the Masterplan did not reflect the Design Code.
- Whilst the overall response from the events were critical of the Masterplan, the feedback gained at some venues were more positive than others and raised different points for consideration. The majority of concerns related to whether there was a need for more housing in the area; how the development will impact the road network of Darlington; the potential ecological and flooding threats due to building on the greenfield land; and the concerns over the timing of the delivery of the services.

- A few suggestions from the consultation included altering the route of the road network to ease pressure on smaller roads and the A1150, bringing forward the delivery of schools and healthcare facilities and ensuring that there are suitable drainage facilities to limit flooding.

5.6 The next stage of the process is to submit an amended Masterplan which has been revised where necessary in relation to the comments and submit this to the Council for agreement. There will be further opportunities to comment on the proposed development at the application stage(s) of the development. The developers remain committed to working with the local community and Council throughout the planning and construction process.

Appendix 1 Consultation Leaflet

Skerningham



Site Location - Aerial Photograph

We invite your feedback on the Draft Comprehensive Masterplan for Skerningham - which is an allocation in the Darlington Local Plan on the northern side of the town now comprising a development of approximately 3,700 dwellings, including a neighbourhood centre, health hub, school(s) and other supporting infrastructure.

Darlington Borough Council recently adopted a Design Code for Skerningham. The next stage is the preparation of a Comprehensive Masterplan, which should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code.

BANKSProperty
development with care
Skerningham
ESTATES Ltd



The input of local residents is key in helping us finalise the Comprehensive Masterplan.

We encourage you to visit our website www.skerningham.co.uk to find out more and submit your feedback.

Please note that the website will go live from **Monday 30th October 2023**.

We are also hosting a series of drop in consultation events at the following venues:



Dolphin Centre, Horse Market, Darlington DL1 5RP, on:

Wednesday 1st November 2023 (9am until 1pm)
Thursday 2nd November 2023 (12pm until 4pm)



ASDA, Whinbush Way, Darlington DL1 3RB, on:

Monday 6th November 2023 (1pm until 5pm)
Tuesday 7th November 2023 (9am until 1pm)

Members of the team from Banks Property and Skerningham Estates Ltd will be available to discuss the Comprehensive Masterplan and answer your questions.

Feedback received by **Sunday 19th November 2023** will be considered as part of any further changes to the Comprehensive Masterplan.

Any further updates in relation to this consultation will be published on the website.


Appendix 2 Consultation Website

Skerningham

Welcome Background Vision for Skerningham Illustrative Masterplan Phasing Plans Comprehensive Masterplan

Welcome

This website relates to proposals at Skerningham Garden Village. The consultation on the draft Comprehensive Masterplan has now ended and we are processing the comments.



What is Skerningham?

Skerningham is an allocation in the Darlington Local Plan, on the northern side of the town, now comprising a development of approximately 3,700 dwellings, including a neighbourhood centre, health hub, school(s) and other supporting infrastructure.

Skerningham is also a designated Garden Village following the announcement by the Government on 27 June 2019.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

Policy H 10 (Skerningham – Site Allocation (Strategic Policy), the Local Plan policy most relevant to the allocation of the site, states that a Comprehensive Masterplan including an Infrastructure Phasing Plan should be prepared by the applicant(s) prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site. It also states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should be based on the design approach and principles established in Darlington Borough Council's Design Code.

The Council recently adopted a Design Code on 28 September 2023, which follows the community consultation workshops that took place in 2022.

The adoption of the [Design Code](#) has allowed progress and consultation on the Draft Comprehensive Masterplan to follow. This consultation is an opportunity to view and provide comments on the draft document, ahead of it being finalised.

Skerningham

Welcome	Background	Vision for Skerningham	Illustrative Masterplan	Phasing Plans	Comprehensive Masterplan
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Background

The Skerningham allocation is a 487 hectare site located to the north of Darlington. It will adjoin the existing communities at Beaumont Hill, Whinfield and Great Burdon. Barmpton Village is also located close to the north eastern edge of the site. The East Coast Mainline also runs through the western part of the site.

The site is allocated for the delivery of up to 4,500 dwellings to be delivered with supporting infrastructure and facilities (as detailed in Policy H 10 a to i). However, as a result of the Golf Club's decision to remain, the capacity of Skerningham is around 3,700 new homes.

Banks Property is the lead developer for the land on the western part of the allocation, which includes land adjacent to the A167 and west of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies the delivery of 600 dwellings on this part of the allocation during the plan period.

Skerningham Estates Ltd is the lead developer for the land on the east of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies 1,050 dwellings to be delivered during the plan period with initial phases located on land adjoining Barmpton Lane.

The remaining dwellings are expected to be delivered post 2036, beyond the current Local Plan period.



Site Location Plan
[Click on the above image to view a larger version](#)

Skerningham

Welcome

Background

Vision for Skerningham

Illustrative Masterplan

Phasing Plans

Comprehensive Masterplan

Vision

"To create a highly liveable and sustainable community that prioritises the people that live there; their health and well-being and overall quality of life."

This vision is established in the Design Code which also sets out the three key objectives to achieve this vision for Skerningham. [The Comprehensive Masterplan](#) has also set to follow these guiding principles.

Objectives

Healthy Living:

A strong health and well-being focus, secured by nature led design, and a 20 minute walkable neighbourhood design philosophy in order to encourage walking and cycling.

This objective follows Darlington's selection as an NHS England Healthy New Town – one of 10 sites in the country chosen to take forward principles to improve health and wellbeing.

Innovation:

Development will embrace the latest technologies in relation to energy, climate change objectives and digital communication. As the build out of the development will take place over an extended period of time, it will continue to adapt to the rapidly changing technology to meet this objective.

Sense of Place:

Skerningham will have a strong identity and sense of place. Architecturally, the layout and appearance of development should be distinctive to Darlington.

It is also recognised from the consultation process that the local communities place high value on access to nature and wildlife and spaces for social interaction. Existing Public Rights of Way will be retained and enhanced along with the provision of new routes towards Community Woodland to the north of the site.

Skerningham

Welcome

Background

Vision for Skerningham

Illustrative Masterplan

Phasing Plans

Comprehensive Masterplan

Illustrative Masterplan

This plan presents an illustrative masterplan for Skerningham.



Illustrative Masterplan
Click on the above image to view a larger version

Following Darlington Golf Club's decision to remain in its current location, this follows Figure 4.2 in the Local Plan. This has an impact on the capacity of the site which would mean a total development in the region of 3,700 dwellings.

The Draft Comprehensive Masterplan includes a suite of parameter plans in Section 4 of the document which provide guiding principles in relation to:

- Green and Blue Infrastructure (along with the management and maintenance of these spaces)
- Access and Movement (including sustainable travel principles)
- Land Uses
- Density and Building Heights

Sections 5 and 6 of the [masterplan document](#) provide further detail in relation to the Design and Character of the development and Infrastructure Requirements associated with the development at Skerningham.

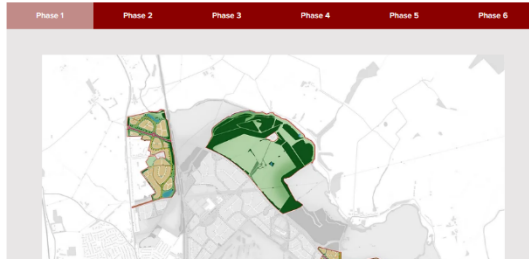
Skerningham

Welcome Background Vision for Skerningham Illustrative Masterplan Phasing Plans Comprehensive Masterplan

Phasing Plans

The development has been identified to come forward in six phases, indicated by the sequencing shown on plans below. Phases 1, 2 and 3 show the development anticipated within the Local Plan period (before 2036). Phases 4, 5 and 6 illustrate the phases of the development beyond this period.

The phasing plans are shown in Section 7 of the Draft Comprehensive Masterplan which also include a detailed breakdown of the supporting infrastructure that will be delivered in each phase of development.



Skerningham

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Comprehensive Masterplan

A copy of the Draft Comprehensive Masterplan is available to download here.



Comprehensive Masterplan
Click on the above image to download the document

Appendix 3 Summary of Changes

The table below provides a summary of the changes to the Comprehensive Masterplan in response to the comments received.

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Change Made to the Masterplan
The name 'Skerningham' sounds too similar to 'Skerne Park'. Other concerns in relation to no mention of Garden Village in the document title.	The Darlington Local Plan refers to the site as "Skerningham", however it is also known as "Skerningham Garden Village". It is recognised that the adopted Design Code refers to the site as "Skerningham Garden Village" so the title of the Comprehensive Masterplan has been updated to ensure a consistent approach.	The front page of the document (along with other relevant parts) has been updated to name the site as 'Skerningham Garden Village'.
No mention of the country park as stated in the Design Code.	The area which contains the woods would be designed to have features which depict a Country Park, and the document has been updated to reflect this.	Section 6 (Page 27), includes new content to make clear the Country Park features that will be taken forward at Skerningham.
Why is development north of the road when the Design Code states that it should all be south of the road.	The route of the local distributor road has been amended through the eastern part of the site in order to be consistent with the Design Code.	On Page 13 of the Masterplan, Figure 4.7 has been updated in the area around Barmpton Lane. In this part of the site, development is shown to be south of the road. This update is also reflected on all relevant plans.
No information is provided in relation to graves onsite.	The document has been updated to acknowledge the presence of human graves within Skerningham Woods, though it is not considered to be appropriate or necessary to plot their locations.	On Page 11 reference to the human graves in Skerningham Woods has been added along with the commitment that this will continue to be respected.
The houses are not required. References also to the 3,700 houses being less than the allocated amount of 4,500 dwellings.	The site has been allocated by the Council for up to 4,500 dwellings, although the Local Plan afforded flexibility about whether Darlington Golf Club relocated or not. The Masterplan is based on the Golf Club's decision to remain in its current location, which has a subsequent impact on the quantum of development.	Page 8 in the Masterplan has been updated to include reference to the Inspector's Report (which refers to 3,700) to demonstrate consistency in terms of the proposed quantum of development in this scenario.
Is the Delivery Trajectory in Figure 8.1 achievable?	The Delivery Trajectory was based on the assumptions in the Local Plan, with an expectation that there would be completed	This update results in an amendment to the Delivery Trajectory in Figure 8.1 and

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Change Made to the Masterplan
	dwellings in 2024. These assumptions have been reviewed, and it is considered that there will be a reduction (from 1,650) 1,450 dwellings within the plan period.	the phasing details in Section 7 of the Masterplan.
It is important that the woodland paths are connected to the development once the Local Distributor Road is built.	There will be a number of crossing points for pedestrians to cross the proposed local distributor road. These will aim to bring pedestrians to road level to be able to cross.	On Page 19 of the Masterplan, new information has been added to show the preferred approach for how pedestrians and cyclists will cross the local distributor road.
There is no mention of the Northern Relief Road. Is this still proposed?	Since the consultation on the draft Masterplan ended, Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) has approved £250 million in funding to deliver the Darlington Northern Relief Road (DNRR). This is a separate project to Skerningham Garden Village, although the Masterplan has been updated to acknowledge this update.	The Masterplan has been updated to acknowledge the DNRR update. References have been added to Pages 13 and 21.
Will the development be served by public transport?	The Design Code requires 80% of households to be within 400m walking distance to a bus stop that is served by a regular day service. The Masterplan includes details of the public transport strategy, although this has been reviewed to ensure the early phases of the development will be served by a regular bus service.	Pages 13 and 18 have been updated following further consideration of the access to bus services in the early phases of the development.
The Comprehensive Masterplan does not explain the infrastructure delivery and phasing for the allocation.	Section 6 details the infrastructure requirements for the allocation and Section 7 includes the phasing of the development. The information has been presented in a way with the aim being that it is simple for readers to understand. That said, the document has been amended in response to this feedback.	Additional detail has been added to Section 6 (Infrastructure Requirements) of the Masterplan to provide further information on the infrastructure requirements for the site. This includes text on page 20 (of the updated document) relating to the delivery of the Local Distributor Road. References have been added throughout to make clear the need for each planning application to demonstrate that it will not prejudice the wider delivery of the allocation, and for the requirement for proportionate contributions to common infrastructure.

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Change Made to the Masterplan
		Additional text has also been added at the start of Section 7 (Infrastructure Phasing Plan) to explain the approach that has been taken to the phasing of the development, which is then presented on the subsequent pages.
The Comprehensive Masterplan does not provide any details for the land to the eastern side of the allocation.	The document has been amended to ensure consistency with the Local Plan and Design Code. Therefore, the Comprehensive Masterplan does not prejudice the final decision on the land use for this area of the allocation, which will be assessed during the review of the Local Plan.	The presentation of this area of the allocation has been amended on the Masterplan (Figure 4.3) and on the Land Use Plan (Figure 4.8). The phasing plans in Section 7.0 have also been amended to show the potential delivery of this land from Phase 4 onwards.
When will the Local Distributor Road be completed?	Policy H 10 (g) requires the completion of the Local Distributor Road (between the A167 and A1150) prior to the occupation of between the 900th and 1,500th dwelling. The modelling work undertaken indicates that this requirement will be at the upper end of the range. As explained in Section 4 of the report, it is expected that the completion of the road will now be delivered in Phase 4, to coincide with this quantum of the development on the site.	The Phasing Plans in Figures 7.3 and 7.4 have been amended to reflect this update.

The following table provides a response to other comments where it is not considered that a change to the Comprehensive Masterplan is required.

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Suggested Change
The Local Distributor Road should be completed at an earlier stage to relieve traffic congestion.	Whilst this comment is noted, this topic was considered in detail during the examination of the Local Plan. This subsequently resulted in Policy H 10 including part g which contains significant detail in relation to the requirements associated with the phased delivery of the Local Distributor Road.	No

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Suggested Change
	The Infrastructure Phasing Plan (in Section 7 of the Masterplan) details the timescales for when each part of the road will be brought forward, and is consistent with the sequence of stages set out in Policy H 10 (g)	
The Masterplan does not mention or identify a location for a stadium for the Darlington Football Club.	We are aware of the relevant press articles, however there are no confirmed plans for where the Football Club will relocate to.	No
No obvious consideration for health care provision	The Masterplan details the location of a health hub which will contain services like a GP and Dentist. These will be reviewed and phased as appropriate with demand.	No
No road should be allowed through the woodland	The road broadly follows the alignment shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 of the Local Plan. This alignment is also shown in the Design Code. It is noted that the Design Code encourages the road to “avoid existing wooded areas as much as possible”. This approach has been followed and it has not been possible to find an appropriate option which avoids the woodland.	no
Want to see a greater mix of densities added, with apartments of up to 4-5 storeys and mix uses below	The proposed density and building heights is consistent with the relevant detail in the adopted Design Code.	No
The school should be delivered at the outset of the development followed by the health hub and community centre	As detailed in the Masterplan, discussions have been held with the Council to understand the demand for school places. It is understood that there is enough capacity in existing schools to meet the need generated by the development until the end of the Local Plan period (2036). The primary school and secondary school are identified for delivery in Phase 4, subject to further assessment nearer the time. The wider local centre is located centrally within the development which will be delivered in Phase 3. This will include a health hub and community centre. Phase 1 includes the provision of local	No

Summary of Comment Received	Response	Suggested Change
	community / convenience provision to the west and east of the allocation.	
The road in from Barmpton Lane is not suitable for the construction access or number of cars and access should be changed	The development team acknowledges concerns over the access from Barmpton Lane. This will be addressed at the planning application stage. As part of any planning permission for the site, a Construction and Management Plan will be conditioned. This will require information on construction and operational traffic to be submitted and approved in writing by the Council.	No
No formal agreement in place with Network Rail regarding where the road will cross	The location of the bridge has been agreed in principle with Network Rail. The next stage in the process is to obtain technical approval which will comprise full details of the bridge design. Discussions on this remain ongoing, although it is not considered that this will affect the level of information shown in the Masterplan.	No
What flooding infrastructure will there be and who will pay for it?	The Masterplan shows details of the drainage strategy for the site, with the creation of run offs into Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) Ponds to allow for the capture of rainwater and help protect land around the site from being flooded. These SUDS ponds will also create areas for biodiversity.	No
The development would impact biodiversity onsite.	The Masterplan details mitigation measures for wildlife and details of planting and green corridors to allow biodiversity to flourish. The development will also be required to deliver at minimum of 10% Net Gain policy for Biodiversity.	No

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**SPECIAL ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 JANUARY 2025**

CALL IN - SKERNINGHAM MASTERPLAN ACCEPTANCE

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To respond to the Quad of Aims detailed by members for call-in of Cabinet decision C76.

Summary

2. At the cabinet meeting held on 3rd December 2024 members agreed that the Skerningham Masterplan Document was consistent with the Darlington Borough Local Plan Policy H 10 and the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
3. Policy H 10 of the Local Plan requires a comprehensive Masterplan including an infrastructure phasing plan be prepared in consultation with the community prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site, that informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development. The Masterplan shall be led by the applicant(s) and should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Council's design code, a strong understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surrounds and incorporate the key principles for the development as set out in points a to i of the Policy.
4. A final version of the Masterplan has been prepared by Litchfields on behalf of Theakston's Land and Banks Group, the two companies with the largest amount of land interest in the area.
5. The production of the Masterplan has followed the requirement of community involvement with a consultation exercise running from 30 October to 30 November 2023. This involved a series of public engagement events. Following that consultation the responses received were reviewed and some amendments were made to the Masterplan.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee acknowledges the response to the Quad of Aims.

Reason

7. The recommendation is to note the details of the responses to the Quad of Aims.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No background papers were used in producing this report.

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

Council Plan	<p>The Local Plan and supporting documents are integral to the delivery of the Council Plan and its priorities (adopted by Council in July 2024). The development of this Masterplan is required by Policy H10 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The priorities of the Council Plan are:</p> <p>ECONOMY - building a strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.</p> <p>The Local Plan allocates land for employment sufficient to meet the future needs of the borough.</p> <p>HOMES – affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents.</p> <p>Skerningham Garden Village will contribute to meeting the boroughs housing needs, including affordable housing requirements.</p> <p>LIVING WELL – a healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most.</p> <p>The existing Local Plan encourages development to consider health and wellbeing with a requirement for larger developments to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Allowance is also made for older people’s accommodation and sets a requirement for adaptable homes.</p> <p>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.</p>
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	<p>The Local Plan contains a mechanism to secure contributions to education provision and secure sites for new provision in key locations. The Masterplan includes site(s) reserved for future education provision.</p> <p>COMMUNITIES – working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities.</p> <p>The Masterplan will help to deliver a cohesive development at Skerningham. The development will include a new neighbourhood centre with community facilities, including a health hub. Additional local facilities will be located to support the early phases of the development.</p> <p>LOCAL ENVIRONMENT – a well-connected, clean and sustainable borough.</p> <p>The Local Plan contains numerous policies to protect both the natural and built environment. The Masterplan sets out that over 55% of the site will be retained as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land, and the existing Golf Club. The development will also be required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.</p>
Addressing inequalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the Local Plan adoption process.
Tackling Climate Change	The developer Masterplan has considered climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The production of this Masterplan is required by Local Plan Policy H10. It has been prepared by Lichfield’s on behalf of Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Group.
Health and Wellbeing	Subsequent planning applications based on this Masterplan, and over 150 homes, will be required to undertake a Health Impact Assessment.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The Masterplan promotes good design and location of development, which discourages crime.
Wards Affected	Whinfield, Harrowgate Hill, Sadberge and Middleton St George, Heighington and Coniscliffe.
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This Masterplan has been developed and funded by the site developers.

Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Quad of Aims of the call in with the officer response are detailed in the table below:

Reasons for Call-In	Response
<p>1. Page 24 of the Masterplan quotes The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings. However, Department of Education has this figure higher at 25 primary and 13 secondary pupils per 100 dwellings. They also go on to say that larger homes (such as the ones in Skerningham Garden Village) and newer houses will typically have more school aged children than this. Fact Sheet 5. New homes and school Qlaces GOV_UK.</p> <p>The Local Plan also references school yields. However, these yields are different to the yields in the Masterplan which are lower. This suggests that the Skerningham Masterplan is not consistent with the Local Plan Policy.</p> <p>We feel this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to look at the data in respect of these assumptions and the discrepancy between the Council's numbers, the Department of Education's numbers and the Local Plan</p>	<p>Homes England - Fact sheet 5: New homes and school places states that 100 homes typically include 25 primary and 13 secondary school pupils. This is based on the DfE's national average pupil yield from 2021/22.</p> <p>The Local Plan at section 10.11.3 references footnote number 92 which states that 'Every 100 new houses is expected, on average, to produce between 18 and 20 primary school age children and 13-15 pupils of secondary age'. This plan was adopted in February 2022.</p> <p>School place planning is undertaken on an annual basis by Edge Analytics, an external company commissioned by TVCA to provider up to date pupil projections for the five Tees Valley local authorities. The current projections for 2024 were based on local data supplied by the council in April 2024 and reflected local housing development pupil yield.</p> <p>The primary and secondary reports from Edge Analytics state:</p> <p>Primary - Pupil yield factors have been calculated specifically for the local authority area. On average, each 100 new family homes are expected to generate approximately 20 additional primary school pupils, 18 non-RC and 2 RC. This is equivalent to 2.8 additional pupils per year group (2.5 non-RC and 0.3 RC).</p> <p>Secondary - Pupil yield factors have been calculated specifically for the local authority area. On average, each 100 new family homes is expected to generate approximately 12 additional</p>

	<p>secondary school aged pupils, 11 non-RC and 2 RC. This is equivalent to 2.5 additional pupils per year group (2.1 non-RC and 0.4 RC).</p> <p>The figures quoted on Page 24 of the Skerningham Masterplan are in line with the more recent, local, information supplied to the council, and subsequently to the developers.</p> <p>Nationally, and locally, birth rates are declining which does mean that data from previous years may have been higher. It must also be remembered that pupil yields are not exact and are averages based on an analysis of pupil data and postcodes from new housing developments.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="837 763 1428 1464"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Primary Yield per 100 dwellings</th> <th>Secondary yield per 100 dwellings</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Homes England / DfE national average 2021/22</td> <td>25</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Plan – February 2022</td> <td>18-20</td> <td>13-15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DBC School place Planning Data – July 2024</td> <td>20</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Skerningham Masterplan</td> <td>20</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Primary Yield per 100 dwellings	Secondary yield per 100 dwellings	Homes England / DfE national average 2021/22	25	13	Local Plan – February 2022	18-20	13-15	DBC School place Planning Data – July 2024	20	12	Skerningham Masterplan	20	12
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DBC School place Planning Data – July 2024	20	12														
Skerningham Masterplan	20	12														
<p>2. According to a submission on 30 August 2024 to Planning Application 24/00772/FULE from Paul Richardson on behalf of the Education Department Consultee Comments for Planning Application 24/00772/FULE, it is stated that there is no spare capacity at Education Village for secondary pupils. This means that pupils will need to go to Longfield School creating a longer journey for residents living east of the East Coast Mainline.</p>	<p>The Systra modelling was developed to assess the impact of development on the highway network and was ultimately used to support delivery of the Local Plan (a statutory requirement). The modelling was based on existing traffic conditions with modelled outputs for future years – 2025, 2030 and 2035 (which more or less coincides with the end of the Plan period). These future year scenarios included housing and employment growth at all of the allocated sites within the Local Plan so did take account of</p>															

<p>Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling in respect of additional car journeys in relation to this and the road capacity to ensure the infrastructure phasing is acceptable. In reviewing the Traffic Modelling info in relation to the Springfield Park Link Road which is very old, it's useful from the point that it has traffic modelling in relation to Skerningham Garden Village Skerningham Garden Village Local Plan (page 9). Without the Local Distributor Road in place and assuming 600 houses have been built at the top of Barmpton Lane, it quotes a 47.6% increase in traffic down Whinbush Way.</p> <p>The Systra traffic modelling done in January 2021 referenced in the Local Plan assumes that part of the Skerningham Link Road (Local Distributor Road) will be built from Barmpton Lane to Bishopton Lane in 2025. It also assumes that the Local Distributor Road would be completed in 2030 which was stated by Andy Casey in the Local Plan hearings. I believe that this modelling, now 5 years out of date, assuming infrastructure in place 5 years early is now of very limited value. There's no clarity on whether this traffic modelling was based on the assumption that Skerningham Garden Village would be a 20 minute neighbourhood and whether they had factored in school trips. The Local Distributor Road is not scheduled to be completed until 2036 by which time there will be 1,450 houses built with no additional schools.</p> <p>We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of due consultation. Scrutiny would like to review recent traffic modelling which would include:</p> <p>a. Traffic at peak time around school time assuming pupils are using the</p>	<p>other development sites such as Burtree Garden Village. Both the strategic and microsimulation modelling assessed the impact of development of the junctions mentioned.</p> <p>The Local Plan was the subject of significant consultation culminating in an Examination in Public in 2021 where objectors and other interested parties had the opportunity to scrutinise the plan, ask questions and raise concerns. There were around 1800 representations, including attendance from a representative of the Green Party. The inspector found the evidence base of the plan (including the modelling) and the Plan itself to be sound. It was then adopted as Council policy in January 2022. Respectfully the time for scrutinising the modelling was prior to adoption of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan adoption is not the end of the planning process. Individual developers coming forward for planning permission for sites, submitting masterplans or design codes need to take account of the policies in the local plan. In the case of the Skerningham Masterplan and specifically relating to highway infrastructure there is a need to satisfy the requirements of Policy H10 – specifically f and g (Skerningham allocation) and Policy IN1 (Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network - Strategic Policy), specifically C vi). The masterplan shows the infrastructure required by these policies and the phasing plan is in compliance with the triggers with the requirements set out in H10 g consequently the masterplan is in keeping with Local Plan and we had no objections to its approval.</p> <p>Skerningham still requires planning permission and is coming forward in phases in line with the Masterplan. The Council constitution requires that these are considered by Planning Committee in line with our statutory planning duty. This process is outside of the scope of scrutiny as it needs to follow a statutory</p>
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<p>existing schools. Assumptions on per number of pupils per 100 houses should also show numbers based on the Department of Education.</p> <p>b. Traffic modelling for general non school traffic</p> <p>c. Traffic modelling should also factor in the additional traffic coming from the Burtree Garden Village</p> <p>d. Traffic modelling should look at how Whinbush Way/ Salters Lane North / Longfield Road / North Road are impacted</p>	<p>process. The latest modelling for this area has been developed by Stantec (previously Fore Consulting) on behalf of the applicant. This is provided to support the submission and is the property of the developer. The modelling report will be available on the planning portal for any members or members of the public to read and make comments. Members would need to make and pass comments on this through the planning portal. Officers will similarly make comments through the portal.</p>
<p>3. The Systra Report entitled Skerningham Railway Crossing - Feasibility Study looks at the various routes for the Local Distributor Road to cross the railway. It considered 4 options, all of which avoided the woods. Point 5.1.5 states 'An area of dense woodland is located to the east of the ECML. For each option, a roundabout has been shown to the east of the ECML to ensure that the proposed link road can divert past and not impact upon the woodland'. However, the Masterplan shows the road going straight through the Skerningham plantation. In the Local Plan, policy H10, item i, vi), it states that wherever possible the Skerningham Garden Village development should retain and enhance hedgerow and trees that contribute to landscape character. We feel that this is evidence that the decision was not taken with the principle of explaining what options were considered and giving reasons for the decision. Scrutiny would like to review any relevant documents that consider these routes and see why the decision was taken to choose an option that goes through Skerningham Woods.</p>	<p>Neither the Local Plan, the Design Code or the Masterplan define the route of the Local Distributor Road. The route of the road as indicated in the Masterplan follows the indicative route shown in Figure 6.2 in the Local Plan with all development to the south of the road. This is therefore not in conflict with the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan Policy H 10 requires a local distributor road between the A167 and A1150. The Policy goes on to say “Precise details of the road and development access points, together with a timetable for implementation, shall be agreed with the Council as part of the comprehensive masterplan, infrastructure phasing plan and any future planning applications.”</p> <p>The final design and route will be part of planning applications submitted through various phases.</p> <p>Policy H 10 also states in i (ii) that the development should “protects and enhances the River Skerne, its valley setting (See Policy ENV 7), and the green corridors (See Policy ENV 3). Where infrastructure crosses these corridors mitigation measures should be provided:”</p> <p>Mitigation measures will be considered as part of the consideration of any planning application.</p> <p>The masterplan is not therefore in conflict with the Local Plan.</p>

	<p>Local Plan Policy H 10 i (vi) does state “wherever possible retains and enhances hedgerows and trees that contribute to landscape character.”</p> <p>The use of the word wherever recognises that this cannot be possible in all cases but will be mitigated against through this Policy and the statutory requirement for a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>The Systra report which was commissioned by Darlington Borough Council solely deals with the crossing of the East Coast Main Line and not any detail of the rest of the route. The report was designed to look at the technical design of any crossings and their feasibility. The consultants brief did not include any work involved in the further alignment of the Local Distributor Road. The developers are not governed by anything within the Systra report.</p> <p>There are no further documents regarding the route of the bridge crossing.</p>
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