



# **DARLINGTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2019-2022**

**Preparation Programme for the  
Darlington Local Plan  
and other  
Local Development Documents**

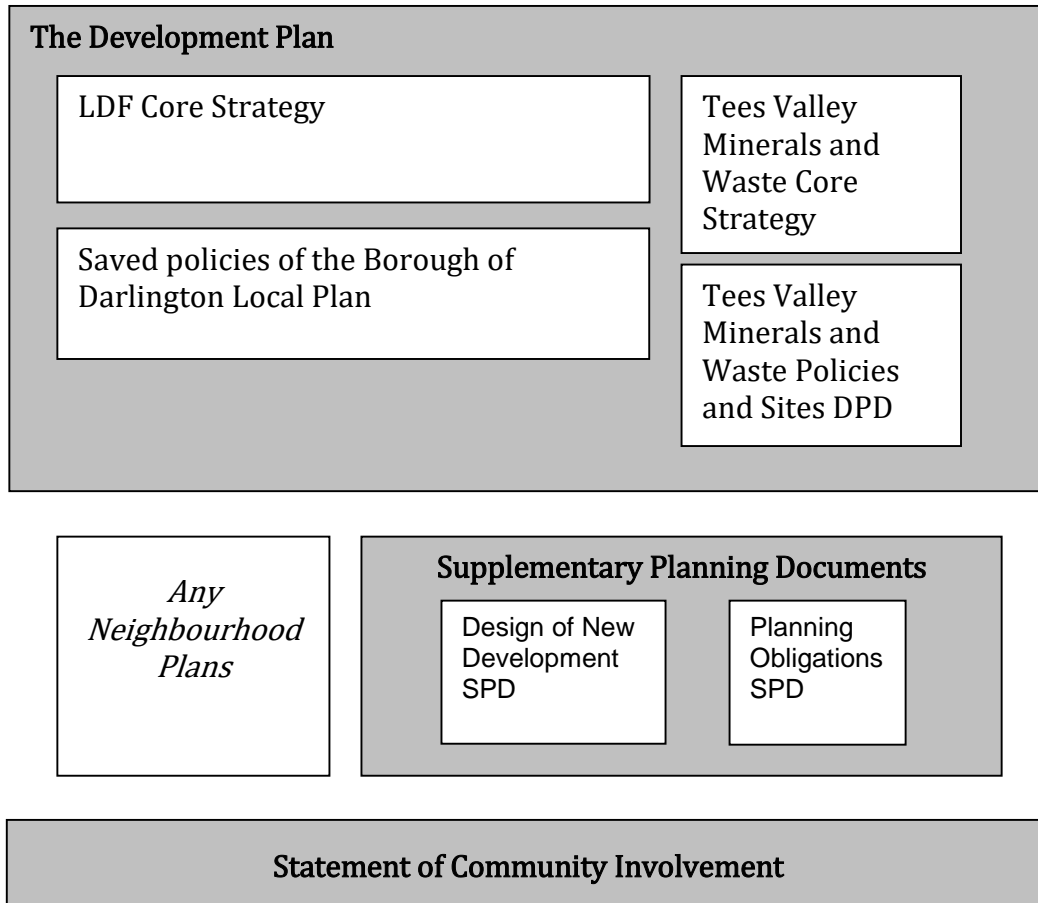
**July 2019**

**Planning Policy  
Economic Initiatives Division**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The LDS sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Development Documents (LDDs) which make up the Council's Local Plan. The LDS must include certain types of LDDs, namely Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The LDS must be made available publically and kept up-to-date. This LDS replaces the 2018 – 2021 LDS.
- 1.2 Figure 1.1 below shows the Council's current planning policy documents, which are part of, or support the Development Plan. It also shows the relationship of documents to one another. All statutory development plan documents and supplementary planning documents can be viewed on the Council's website, [www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy).

**Figure 1.1: Planning Policy Documents for Darlington Borough**



- 1.3 In November 2015 Darlington Borough Council decided to halt work on the emerging Making and Growing Places allocations document (an adopted Core Strategy was already in place) based mainly on concerns around the robustness of the housing supply and requirement figures. The decision was taken to produce a new comprehensive Local Plan. For the period before the new plan is adopted, an Interim Planning Position Statement

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has been produced to provide guidance to developers on the local interpretation of National Planning Policy. A copy is available on the Council's website at [www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

### **3. THE DARLINGTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2019-22**

- 3.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the content, timing and resourcing of planning policy document preparation for the next three years, 2019-22. It plans for effective development plan coverage of the whole Borough, and is published to provide up to date information direct to the public about the Council's plan making activities. It will be updated as necessary to ensure it remains realistic and definitive.

#### **The New Local Plan**

- 3.2 On 15 November 2015 Cabinet agreed to proceed with a new Local Plan, to replace the existing Development Plan (the LDF Core Strategy (2011) and various saved Darlington Local Plan (2001) policies. The exception to this is the Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Policies and Sites DPDs, to be reviewed at a later date. The Council aims to submit the Local Plan for inspection this year (with adoption likely to take another few months). The new Local Plan will cover the period between 2016 -2036.
- 3.3 A successful Local Plan will help create the conditions to deliver the following outcomes for Darlington:
- Well planned, high quality, sustainable places
  - Inclusive and accessible places, to serve all needs and communities
  - An attractive place to live, visit and invest
  - Economic growth, new jobs and prosperity
  - A vibrant town centre with strong retail, leisure and commercial sectors
  - Celebrate and protect Darlington's heritage assets and key open spaces
  - Integrated strategic social and physical infrastructure, phased to meet the needs of new development
  - Increased resilience to climate change
  - Greater certainty for residents, investors and stakeholders
- 3.4 **Table 1** sets out the timeline and key tasks for preparing the Local Plan. Progress will be monitored against it and revisions made if necessary.

#### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

- 3.5 The SCI sets out how people and organisations can get involved in shaping the Local Plan. Specifically it explains how and when the Council will engage with people and communities. Thus, throughout the preparation of the Local Plan the Council will consult with individuals, local communities, interest groups, businesses and statutory bodies. The responses to these consultations will be reviewed by the Council and considered in full, informing the Local Plan as necessary, before a final version is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.
- 3.6 A revised Statement of Community Involvement (Part 1) was adopted in July 2016 that covered the Local Plan process. No amendments are proposed to that at this time.

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- 3.7 In addition to the overarching principles set out in the SCI, before all key stages of a Local Development Document, officers will produce an Engagement Plan, setting out details of when and how we will consult/ engage throughout the process. This will ensure consideration is given to the most effective way of communicating the particular issue, and that the methods engaged are proportionate.
- 3.8 The nature of Engagement Plans will be determined depending on the nature of the issues, and those likely to be affected. For example, they could be area based if the particular issue concerns a specific site, or they could target a particular sector. Consultations plans will ensure that consultations always meet statutory requirements.

**Other Local Planning Documents**

- 3.9 A Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council in January 2013. It helps the Council to get contributions from developers towards affordable housing and the costs of mitigating the impact of new development on local infrastructure. The SPD includes a commitment to review the operation of the policies and, in light of the Council's experience using the SPD, changing market circumstances and development costs, and government guidance on the use of Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy, it is proposed that a revision of the SPD will be undertaken. It is noted that the Chancellor announced a consultation on proposed changes to "development contributions" and this may impact the timetable.
- 3.10 The Design of New Development SPD sets out general and detailed design guidelines for new development to provide a framework to secure high quality, safe, distinctive, sustainable design in new developments. It needs to be revised to reflect changes to Building Regulations, Code for Sustainable Homes, and Development Management amenity issues. Further, there are matters that have arisen from the Healthy New Town Project that maybe usefully incorporated into this guidance.
- 3.11 **Table 1 (page 6)** gives an overview of the Local Development Scheme. More detail on the documents that will be prepared over the next three years is given in **Section 5** of this report.

**Neighbourhood Planning**

- 3.12 Introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the Council has a duty to support Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums that wish to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. When adopted Neighbourhood Plans form part of the statutory development plan alongside the Local Plan. The 5 areas, formally designated as Neighbourhood Plan Areas:
- Sadberge Parish Council, (decision subsequently taken not to proceed)
  - Middleton St George/Low Dinsdale Parish Councils, and
  - Blackwell Neighbourhood Forum.
  - Low Conniscliffe Parish Council (Approved at referendum on 23 May 2019)
  - Hurworth Parish Council

Other local communities may start work on Neighbourhood Plans during the Local Plan preparation period.

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- 3.13 No contingency has been built into the Planning Policy team's work programme to respond to requests for advice and support on Neighbourhood Planning, and the situation will be continually monitored.

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**TABLE 1 – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2019-2022**

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Role and Subject</b>	<b>Chain of Conformity</b>	<b>Commence</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>Adoption</b>
<b>Darlington Local Plan</b>	DPD	Sets out development policies for day to day use in considering a range of spatial development proposals, allocates sites for new development, and identifies areas of constraint. Covers the whole Borough.	National Planning Policy Framework	January 2016 Draft Plan June 2018	July 2019	October/November 2019	June 2020
<b>Proposals Map and Insets</b>	DPD	Illustrates on an Ordnance Survey map the policies and allocations of the Local Plan.	Consequential to the preparation of the Local Plan.	Updated as part of Local Plan			
<b>Revised Planning Obligations</b>	SPD	Detailed application of planning obligations	National guidance & Core Strategy	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020		Winter 2020
<b>Revised Design of New Development</b>	SPD	Design guidelines for new development	National guidance & Core Strategy	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020		Winter 2020

## **4. SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

- 4.1 This statement explains the approach to preparing the Local Plan and how resources and risks will be managed.

### **Relationship with Local Strategies**

- 4.2 'One Darlington Perfectly Placed', Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy, sets out the community's shared vision and outcomes for the future of Darlington for the period 2008-2026. The Local Plan reflects spatially aspects of the strategy and ensures that the land use requirements arising from it are addressed.
- 4.3 Council, and other local strategies, with land use implications directly inform the preparation of DPDs and SPDs. These can all be found on the Council's website [www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy). Key examples include the Housing Strategy, the Economic Strategy, the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Parking Strategy and the Sport and Physical Activities Strategy.

### **Joint Working**

- 4.4 The benefits of joint working on issues with strategic cross boundary implications have been recognised for some time by the local authorities within the Tees Valley. The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'Duty to Co-operate' placing this work on a statutory footing. A Tees Valley Development Plans Officers' Group meets on a regular basis, to share information and best practice, facilitate joint working and explore further opportunities. Membership of the group also includes representatives of Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and approximately every quarter meetings have been opened up to local authorities adjacent to the Tees Valley in County Durham and North Yorkshire. The Member with the Economy and Regeneration portfolio will and has conducted a series of discussions at political level with adjoining Planning Authorities.

### **Evidence**

- 4.5 The NPPF states that Local Plans should be based on an up to date and robust evidence base. A large amount of evidence gathered to inform the aborted Making and Growing Places DPD was used for the new Local Plan, although a significant amount of additional evidence has also been produced to reflect the extended Plan Period to 2036 as appropriate.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 4.6 Sustainability appraisal (SA) is carried out for all the development plan documents prepared (and SPDs where screening indicates it is necessary), and is an integral component of all stages of plan preparation. SA identifies the significant environmental, social and economic impacts of the policies and proposals and identifies if/how policies and proposals can be amended to achieve net gains across all three dimensions of sustainability. The process is undertaken to accord with the Strategic Environmental

Assessment Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC). Cabinet have already agreed the Sustainability Appraisal Framework being used to test the Local Plan options against and an SA produced and consulted upon in Summer 2018 alongside the Draft Plan.

- 4.7 The Sustainability Assessment is being assessed using internal resources.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 4.8 Equalities Impact Assessment and Disability Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken and its findings used to feedback into further policy development throughout planning policy document preparation. It is reported on at key stages in the process. It is undertaken in-house within the team, with the views of protected characteristics groups being sought at key stages.

### **Staff Resources**

- 4.9 The Planning Policy team is within the Economic Growth Directorate. It leads the preparation of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. The team currently includes a Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy & Environment, one Principal Planning Officer,, three full-time Planning Officers and 1.5 Technical Officers. The Assistant Director (Economic Growth) also assists with various aspects of preparation including providing the strategic steer, the Member interface and public consultation.
- 4.10 Success in achieving the milestones set out in this LDS will depend on the amount of non plan preparation work the team does, on the amount and timeliness of help from colleagues across the Council in specific policy areas, such as transport and housing, and on there being no further cuts to the staffing resources available for planning policy work.
- 4.11 A Local Plan Members Reference Group (all party) and a Local Plan Steering Group (LPSG) (including non-Council stakeholders) is also in place to ensure input into planning policy document preparation from across the Council. These groups inform the recommendations that are placed before the Joint Management Team (JMT) or Chief Officers Board (COB), and/or Members.
- 4.12. Consultants are also used on specific pieces of work, particularly work carried out jointly by the Tees Valley authorities, and specialist technical studies and work. Officers from Tees Valley Combined Authority provide some statistical information and manage specific joint commissions of the Tees Valley authorities, such as for the economy and infrastructure.

### **Financial Resources**

- 4.13 A consolidated budget has been established across the Economic Initiatives Division which covers the costs associated with Local Plan preparation (consultant's fees for evidence gathering, consultations and printing).
- 4.14 It is not anticipated there will need to be any significant further evidence gathering or consultation work during the remaining stages of plan preparation. There will be a need



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to carry out a Public Examination into the Local Plan in 2020, and a budget of £80,000 has been reserved for that.

- 4.15 The programme proposed in the LDS assumes that the budgetary resources that have been allocated to Planning Policy work in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan are available in their entirety.

### Monitoring

- 4.16 Up to date information about the Council's progress in plan preparation will be included in the Local Plan Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR), together with any reasons why plan making targets have not been met, and reporting on the effectiveness of and delivery against saved Local Plan and Core Strategy policies. It is published in a Factsheet format, as soon as is convenient after the end of the reporting year (31<sup>st</sup> March). It includes the following information:

- Progress in preparing the Darlington Local Plan, compared with the milestones set out in the latest LDS, reasons for and proposed actions to address any slippage
- Any factors affecting the current year's LDS milestones and planned action.
- The need for new evidence or research.
- A review of policy effectiveness.
- Information showing future housing provision against housing requirements.

### Risk Assessment

- 4.17 A risk assessment has been carried out for the LDS. The key areas of risk have been identified below as well as the actions that will be put in place to mitigate the risks:

Risk Identified	Mitigating Actions
Implications of changes to the national planning system and policy framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep up to date with best practice, Inspectors and Court decisions relating to plan preparation.</li> <li>• Keep up to date with changes to national policy and implications for the Local Plan process</li> <li>• Maintain up-to-date local evidence base.</li> </ul>
Not meeting 2017 government deadline for Local Plan adoption, leading to intervention by SoS (NB – Darlington has not yet been identified as a Planning Authority requiring intervention measures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep up to date with Government criteria for intervention and consider likelihood of intervention.</li> <li>• Maintain up-to-date LDS showing key milestones towards adoption.</li> <li>• Maintain progress against milestones.</li> </ul>
Ability to maintain staffing levels as Council continues to implement budget cuts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review the plan preparation programme through this LDS and its updates to match any changes in staff resources, changes of planning policy workstreams and other policy workstreams that staff are required to contribute to.</li> <li>• Flexible use of Planning Officers from other Sections to support Local Plan</li> <li>• Recruit extra (temporary) staff, where necessary, to meet peaks in workload around key stages of plan development</li> </ul>
Staff turnover, maternity leave or long term illness within core team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise recruitment activity as soon as notice given.</li> <li>• Manage workloads to reduce stress.</li> <li>• Spread knowledge within core team to ensure a back-up if specialist absent.</li> <li>• Use short and medium term work experience placements for mutual benefit.</li> </ul>
Completion of evidence base takes longer than expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear specification in consultancy briefs, and tighter project management of consultancy commissions.</li> </ul>

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Risk Identified	Mitigating Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure core team is kept abreast of latest good practice cited on discussion fora and other sources.</li> <li>Ensure team carries out appropriate CPD to keep up to date with best practice.</li> <li>Allow contingency in LDS for project overrun.</li> </ul>
Increased volume, complexity or scope of non Local Plan work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular review of extent of non Local Plan work handled by core team.</li> <li>Assess options for further redeployment from within or outside of the Council.</li> </ul>
Key stakeholders/ partners, such as infrastructure providers, unable to provide information or other input at key stages in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure commitment to contributing to Local Plan at the highest level in partners organisations, highlighting role of Local Plan in delivering the sustainable community strategy.</li> <li>Provide stakeholders/partners with good notice of what will be required of them, and when.</li> <li>Investigate ways of pooling resources to achieve desired outcomes.</li> </ul>
Volume and complexity of representations and comment exceeds expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with key stakeholders, developers, landowners and other local interests throughout the policy development</li> <li>Build capacity outside of team to deal with processing representations received, e.g. colleagues within section and wider Division</li> <li>Clarify through SCI how representations will be handled and do not respond on an individual basis.</li> <li>Depends on number of comments at draft stage and how many we are able to negotiate to withdraw to save Examination time.</li> </ul>
DPDs prepared are not found sound, have to be withdrawn, or are subject to legal challenge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checking against the tests of soundness at each key stage of the plan preparation process, making use of the PAS self assessment toolkit.</li> <li>Carry out community engagement in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.</li> <li>Be diligent in undertaking and recording actions against new 'duty to co-operate'.</li> </ul>
Change of political priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member involvement throughout the plan preparation process.</li> </ul>

## 5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT (LDD) PROFILES

5.1 This section provides a standard profile for each of the LDD's we intend to prepare, as identified in **Table 1**.

Local Plan	
<b>DOCUMENT DETAILS:</b>	
<b>Role &amp; Content:</b>	Borough-wide detailed generic development policies, policies related to specific designations and environmental safeguarding areas and land allocations for different types of new development, cross referenced to a Policies Map.
<b>Geographical Coverage:</b>	Borough of Darlington
<b>Status:</b>	Development Plan Document
<b>Review</b>	Considered through the Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report.
<b>TIMETABLE:</b>	
<b>Commencement of process</b>	January 2016
<b>Consultation on Strategic Issues and Options (Reg 18)</b>	April 2016 to September 2016
<b>Draft Local Plan (Reg 18)</b>	June 2018 to August 2018
<b>Pre-submission publication (Reg 19)</b>	July 2019

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<b>Submission to Secretary of State (Reg. 22)</b>	October/November 2019
<b>Pre-hearing meeting</b>	March 2020
<b>Hearing Sessions Commence</b>	April 2020
<b>Estimated Date Adoption</b>	June 2020
<b>PRODUCTION:</b>	
<b>Organisational Lead:</b>	Director of Economic Growth
<b>Lead Section</b>	Planning Policy Team
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Cabinet Place Scrutiny Committee and Members Panel Joint Management Team & Chief Officers Board Economic Growth Senior Leadership Team Local Plan Members Reference Group Local Plan Steering Group
<b>Internal Resources:</b>	Economic Growth Division, Communications Unit, Xentrall Design and Print Unit, Development Management. Input from other divisions of the Council as required.
<b>External Resources:</b>	Consultancy and development industry support for specific aspects of preparing and updating the evidence base, such as master planning and the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.
<b>Evidence Base</b>	The Sustainable Community Strategy for Darlington, a range of technical studies (available on the Council's website) and previous consultation responses, sustainability appraisal and other assessment work carried out by the Council.
<b>Community &amp; Stakeholder Involvement</b>	Consult Council Members. Consult local people, including Darlington Partnership, Parish Councils, development industry representatives, business groups, business operators and government agencies, in accordance with the Council's adopted SCI.

<b>Revised Planning Obligations SPD</b>	
<b>DOCUMENT DETAILS:</b>	
<b>Role &amp; Content:</b>	Borough wide detailed technical guidance relating to the provision of planning obligations for a range of physical, social and green infrastructure from new development. It includes standard charges and formulae. The SPD develops and reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy Policy CS4.
<b>Geographical Coverage:</b>	Borough of Darlington
<b>Status:</b>	Supplementary Planning Document – adopted January 2013
<b>Conformity</b>	National Planning Policy Framework and Emerging Local Plan
<b>Review</b>	The current SPD includes a commitment to review the operation of the policies and, in light of the Council's experience using the SPD, changing market circumstances and development costs, and government guidance on the use of Section 106 Agreements and the

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Community Infrastructure Levy, it is proposed that a revision of the SPD will be undertaken.	
<b>TIMETABLE:</b>	
<b>Commence preparation of Draft Revised SPD</b>	Spring 2020
<b>Consultation on Draft Revised SPD</b>	Autumn 2020
<b>Estimated Date Adoption</b>	Winter 2020
<b>PRODUCTION:</b>	
<b>Organisational Lead:</b>	Director of Economic Growth
<b>Lead Section</b>	Planning Policy Team
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Cabinet Place Scrutiny Committee Joint Management Team / Chief Officers Board Economic Growth Senior Leadership Team Local Plan Members Reference Group Local Plan Steering Group
<b>Internal Resources:</b>	Asset Management Working Group Input from other divisions of the Council as required Communications Unit Xentrall Design and Print Xentrall Web Team
<b>External Resources:</b>	Viability information provided by the District Valuer.
<b>Evidence Base</b>	Economic Viability of Housing Land and Non Housing land studies and addendum, various needs analyses; national guidelines; Sustainable Community Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan
<b>Community &amp; Stakeholder Involvement</b>	Council Members, local people, Darlington Partnership, Parish Councils, development industry representatives, government agencies, in accordance with the Council's adopted SCI.

Revised Design of New Development SPD	
<b>DOCUMENT DETAILS:</b>	
<b>Role &amp; Content:</b>	Sets out general and detailed design guidelines for new development to provide a framework to secure high quality, safe, distinctive, sustainable design in new developments.
<b>Geographical Coverage:</b>	Borough of Darlington
<b>Status:</b>	Supplementary Planning Document – adopted July 2009
<b>Conformity</b>	National Planning Policy Framework and elements of Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy
<b>Review</b>	It needs to be revised to reflect changes to Building Regulations, Code for Sustainable Homes, and Development Management amenity issues. Review will be dependent on whether Local Plan Policy covers issues

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<b>TIMETABLE:</b>	
<b>Commence preparation of Draft Revised SPD</b>	Spring 2020
<b>Consultation on Draft Revised SPD</b>	Autumn 2020
<b>Estimated Date Adoption</b>	Winter 2020
<b>PRODUCTION:</b>	
<b>Organisational Lead:</b>	Director of Economic Growth
<b>Lead Section</b>	Planning Policy Team
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	Cabinet Place Scrutiny Committee Joint Management Team / Chief Officers Board Economic Growth Senior Leadership Team Local Plan Members Reference Group Local Plan Steering Group
<b>Internal Resources:</b>	Development Management Communications Unit Xentrall Design and Print Unit.
<b>External Resources:</b>	None
<b>Evidence Base</b>	
<b>Community &amp; Stakeholder Involvement</b>	Council Members, local people, Darlington Partnership, Parish Councils, development industry representatives, government agencies, in accordance with the Council's adopted SCI.