

**POLICY H 10: SKERNINGHAM STRATEGIC ALLOCATION
SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND RESPONSES**

Please note: Recommend changes outlined in this paper are in response to the main issues raised during the consultation on the Draft Local Plan. Further changes have been recommended to the policy in relation to other individual comments, and are set out within the main Consultation Summary and Response table.

NUMBERS AND STRATEGY

Dispute the need for this many homes. The Government figure is much lower.

Please see officer response on housing requirement and standard method.

Priority should be given to the development of brownfield land and use of empty properties.

Please see officer response on brownfield sites, urban sprawl and empty homes.

Object to the scale of development proposed on the site.

The Council has adopted a balanced strategy to meeting its housing requirement through the allocation of 18 sites of which 7 sites are 150 dwellings or less, and a further 5 sites under 500 dwellings (at draft plan stage 14 of the 26 proposed allocation sites were 150 dwellings or less). Furthermore, the sites are appropriately spread across the urban area, urban extensions, and the Boroughs larger service villages.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for larger scale development such as through significant extensions to existing towns, provided that they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. This is the Council's intention for the Skerningham Strategic Allocation which has been selected following the consideration of a number of potential strategic growth options as part of the Issues and Scoping consultation and subsequently the Sustainability Appraisal process. The North/North East of Darlington is considered to be a suitable, sustainable and deliverable location for a significant extension of the town.

There are not the jobs to support this scale of development.

The Council's emerging Local Plan provides for the creation of 7,000 new jobs within the plan period. This is in line with previously achieved job creation levels and is therefore deliverable to 2036. The Draft Local Plan identifies 175 hectares (net available) employment land on existing and proposed employment sites, most of which is situated on the east and north-west sides of Darlington town.

It represents development in the countryside and a considerable expansion of the development limit contrary to the NPPF.

Development in the countryside on the edge of settlements is not contrary to the NPPF provided that the strategy and sites selected by the Local Plan can be demonstrated to be in line with the overall purpose of the planning system, that is, to contribute to the achievement

of sustainable development. In line with the NPPF, the Council has sought to make effective use of land in prioritising the development of previously developed land where it is suitable and viable to do so. In selecting allocation sites on the urban edge, the Council has sought to avoid areas of highest landscape, environmental and agricultural value as considered in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal.

This proposal has been led by speculative land agents rather than by the Council.

The Local Plan process has been led by Darlington Borough Council as the local planning authority for the borough. The Council is required to meet the needs of the Borough through the preparation of a Local Plan. In order to identify sufficient suitable, available and deliverable sites the Council initiated a call for sites process in 2014 alongside the Issues and Scoping consultation. This process resulted in some 120 sites being put forward by landowners and developers for consideration as part of the Local Plan. These sites have subsequently been assessed through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal processes, to determine their suitability and sustainability respectively for development, and therefore potential for allocation in the Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal process also considered the environmental, social and economic sustainability of various strategic development options open to the Council in developing the Local Plan. To take allocation sites through examination the Council will need to demonstrate that they are capable of being delivered over the Local Plan period, in order to demonstrate this it is necessary to engage with the landowner and developers promoting sites.

Through this process it became clear that sites on the north side of Darlington town had the potential to serve as strategic urban extensions to the town and deliver significant numbers of houses, along with suitably located employment land, to help meet identified local needs. To successfully deliver larger scale sites it is necessary and prudent to engage with the landowners and developers involved in their promotion in order to identify all of the constraints and opportunities involved, understand the viability of development and to develop a masterplan for their development.

The town centre is diminishing.

Town centres around the country are facing a number of challenges such as the growth of online shopping, pressure from out of centre retailing and supermarkets, and reduced town centre footfall. However, the nature of town centres are changing and adapting to these pressures becoming more of a mixed shopping and leisure destination, with an increase in other land uses including residential and office use increasing activity in centres throughout the day. Skerningham Strategic Allocation, along with growth elsewhere around the town, will generate increased expenditure in the town centre that will help to support local employment and the vitality and viability of the centre.

Recommended changes to Local Plan

Amend paragraph 6.10.8 to read: 'The site promoters have indicated that the site has the potential to provide ~~up to~~ 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 District over the plan period on existing employment sites, ~~and at~~ 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.'

ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

Development of this site will have an adverse impact on the character of the area and the local environment, resulting in the loss of valuable countryside/agricultural land and wildlife habitats. The development will have no environmental benefits for the area.

An objective of the masterplanning exercise being undertaken for the Skerningham Strategic Allocation is to ensure that key landscape elements, including both natural and historic assets on the site, green spaces and public routes within the area, are retained and protected. The existing green corridor alongside the River Skerne is to be retained within the masterplan along with the creation of new open space to serve new and existing residents and an increase in the area of woodland on the site proposed.

Whilst the proposed build development will result in a change to landscape character, proposed development areas on the site have been located so as to minimise the adverse effects on the wider landscape. This includes the siting of development away from prominent ridge lines, working with the local topography and incorporating existing landscape features such as hedgerows, woodland and trees. Around 45% of the masterplan area is to remain open; this is predominantly to be located in the more sensitive landscape character areas (e.g. in the vicinity of the River Skerne).

Although the proposal will result in the loss of agricultural land, where survey data exists, this confirms that the land is classified as 3b (i.e. not the best and most versatile agricultural land). Across Darlington there are around 14,268 hectares of agricultural land (based on local authority data from Defra, 2016). The proposed Skerningham Garden Community allocation covers 490 hectares, the equivalent of 3% of the total agricultural land in the Borough. As such, the proposed development will not have a materially adverse effect on the quantum of agricultural land in the Borough.

A preliminary ecological appraisal has been undertaken by the site promoter. This survey work has not identified any constraints that would prevent the site from being developed, subject to appropriate mitigation. Mitigation will include strengthening the green infrastructure network within the site providing for net bio-diversity gains in accordance with paragraph 170 of the NPPF and safeguarding protected species and habitats.

This will have an impact on resident's health and wellbeing.

Since 2016 Darlington has been an NHS Healthy New Towns pilot alongside nine other local authority areas across England. Policies in the emerging Local Plan have been informed by six Darlington Healthy New Towns Design Principles. The Draft Local Plan also contains Policy DC 2: Health and Wellbeing, which encourages developments that support improvements to health and wellbeing in Darlington through a number of measures such as integrating health and community facilities, improving accessibility to green spaces, and avoiding impacts on the environment and residential amenity. The policy also requires that developments of 100 or more homes are supported by a Health Impact Assessment as part of the planning application to explain how health considerations have informed design.

The Skerningham strategic Allocation, and associated masterplan framework, has been informed by the Darlington Healthy New Town Design Principles. This is illustrated by the inclusion of measures such as:

- Including a centrally located and well connected neighbourhood centre offering a range of community facilities and services, including the delivery of a health hub;
- Providing 2 new primary schools, crèche and nursery provision, along with a reserve site for a new secondary school;
- Retaining and extending public rights of way, footpaths and cycle routes across the site;
- Providing a network of green and blue infrastructure, with the priority given to wildlife friendly green space (under the provisions of Policy ENV 5), along with space for sport and informal recreation and play;
- Maintaining the green corridor along the River Skerne valley;
- Protecting the amenity of existing residents;
- Providing a focus on encouraging sustainable transport modes including, public transport, walking and cycling, with strong links to adjoining communities, employment locations and Darlington town centre.

Other policies in the Local Plan will also influence the developments impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, including mental health, such as:

- Policy DC 1: Sustainable Design Principles – seeking to reduce carbon emission and create safe and attractive environments;
- Policy H 4: Housing Mix – expecting housing developments to provide an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet local needs, supporting proposals for specialised housing for older people and those with disabilities, and requiring that a percentage of all new houses meet higher accessible and adaptable dwelling standards; and
- Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development – conserving and enhancing elements of biodiversity and geodiversity importance on sites with the aim of securing net gains for biodiversity as a result of development.

The area is used for recreation by residents.

Whilst development of the Skerningham Strategic Allocation will inevitably change the nature of the landscape of the area, it will maintain opportunities for recreation by new and existing residents. The walking routes (including formal Public Rights of Way) will be retained and extended as part of the sites development, including new routes along the southern side of the River Skerne. The area of community woodland is to be increase on the site and access will be retained. Existing areas of open space are also to be retained with additional green infrastructure provided, as part of an extensive network of greenspace, as part of the development. Policy ENV 5 of the Draft Local Plan prioritises the provision of wildlife friendly green space as part of on-site provision. The River Skerne Valley will remain as a Strategic Green Corridor in line with the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and a further local corridor will be created alongside the line of the East Coast Mainline. The golf club is to be relocated into the area around the community woodland.

Development will impact on/result in the loss of Public Rights of Way. Object to any loss of Green lane.

Green Lane will be incorporated within the future Skerningham Strategic Allocation development. It will be retained and new linkages to the wider green space network

proposed will be introduced across the site linking communities to local facilities/services and the countryside. Throughout the proposed development, existing rights of way will be retained, wherever practicable along their existing alignment, and new routes provided ensuring that there is an increase in the amount of accessible routes, including those for pedestrians, cyclists and horses.

This will impact on the Brightwater Partnership project.

The circular route proposed under the Brightwater Partnership project on the south side of the River Skerne has been incorporated into the layout of the masterplan framework, along with additional routes providing improved connections to new and existing residential communities.

All of the existing community woodland should be retained. New tree planting to replace the loss of Community Woodland would take decades to establish. Any replacement would be vastly inferior.

As much of the existing community woodland as is possible will be retained as part of the relocation of Darlington Golf Club. It is acknowledged that new tree planting will take time to establish, just as the existing wooded areas have, but new planting will be phased alongside development to ensure that the new planting will have established by the time that the development is complete. New planting will take place as a continuation of the existing woodland site alongside the River Skerne, with the requirement for a net increase in the area of community woodland set out in the policy. The same level of community access as is currently enjoyed by residents will be expected after development, with new routes created along the southern side of the River Skerne. In addition existing hedgerow trees within the wider site will be retained wherever possible and new native trees planted as part of a coordinated landscaping strategy between buildings and as part of new green spaces.

The relocation of the golf club will impact on Skertingham Community Woodland and permissive Public Rights of Way in the area. There is no justification for the relocation of the golf club.

The relocation of Darlington Golf Club will enable new residential properties to be located closer to the town centre, existing local services and employment opportunities. It will allow for the creation of a more logical layout of development on the Skertingham site with a principal vehicular access from the A1150 into the centre of the site. Permissive rights of way in the area will be retained wherever possible along their existing alignment, and as much of the existing community woodland as possible will be retained.

Darlington Golf Club was originally located closer to the River Skerne, north-west of its current location. The relocation of the golf club will be undertaken with the cooperation of Darlington Golf Club who will benefit from the proposal through the provision of new modern facilities.

See responses above for further consideration of the impact of the allocation on rights of way and the community woodland.

The Skertingham Masterplan is at odds with the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and standards.

The River Skerne Valley will remain as a Strategic Green Corridor in line with the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and a further local corridor will be created alongside the line of the East Coast Mainline. New green space will be required as part of development in line with the provisions of Policies ENV 4: Green Infrastructure and ENV 5: Green Infrastructure Standards. The allocation is required to deliver a net increase in the area of community woodland on the site as a consequence of development. Existing wildlife interests on the site will be protected under Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development.

Object to the proposed changes to Springfield Park (which is an Asset of Community Value). Allowing a road across Springfield Park will destroy it.

The proposals set out in the Draft Local Plan would see Springfield Park retained as part of the sites development with provision made for a new vehicular access across the eastern edge of the park designed so as to minimise its impact on the recreational value of the remaining parkland area. Replacement green space was to be provided on the land immediately to the north of the park, along with suitable enhancements to the park designed in consultation with the local community. However, following additional engagement with the public and other stakeholders on this matter in January 2020, organised at the request of Council Members, Springfield Park has been removed from the Skerningham Strategic Allocation Site.

Concerned that development will result in flooding of the River Skerne.

New development will be focused in areas of low flood risk (Flood Zone 1) and should adhere to the requirements of policy DC 4 (Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage Systems). Areas at risk of surface water flooding have been taken into account in the layout of development on the emerging masterplan. Built development will be located outside flood zones 2 and 3 (i.e. those areas most susceptible to flooding). Through incorporating appropriate sustainable drainage systems development will limit water runoff into watercourses to greenfield rates in line with Policy DC 4: Flood Risk & Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). Priority will be given to the use of natural drainage features that will form part of the blue-green infrastructure provision on the site.

Development will compromise the character and setting of the listed building on the site. The Council has overlooked the deserted medieval village on the site.

Where necessary, the Council will undertake an evaluation of the likely impact of proposed allocation sites on those elements that contribute to the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, as part of a heritage impact assessment. This work will be undertaken prior to their inclusion in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. Once completed, appropriate mitigation measures identified will be included within the policy and/or supporting text.

The area associated with the potential location of the deserted medieval village of Skerningham is included on Figure C.1 showing Areas of High Archaeological Potential, found in Appendix C of the Draft Local Plan. Under the provisions of Policy ENV 1, development proposals on the Skerningham Strategic Allocation must be accompanied by an archaeological evaluation report.

Development will bring noise, air and light pollution.

The NPPF (paragraph 170) states that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural environment through, amongst other things, preventing new development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. It goes on to state that development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

New development will have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. through the use of energy and vehicle emissions) but the Draft Local Plan seeks to minimise this through its locational strategy and a number of complimentary policy requirements. The strategy looks to locate development in sustainable locations reducing the need to travel to access services, facilities and employment, maximising opportunities for people to use sustainable methods of travel, consequently reducing emissions from private vehicles. All new development will be required to adhere to relevant national standards on construction, materials, energy efficiency of building and water use. The Sustainability Appraisal which informed the Council's decisions on site selection also considered the potential for noise, vibration, odour and light pollution resulting from different site options, seeking to avoid locations that would be more susceptible.

Below are a number of examples of how policies in the Draft Local Plan seek to influence the location, form and design of new development in order to minimise its impact on different forms of pollution:

- Policy DC1: Sustainable Design Principles - requires developments to demonstrate that the layout, orientation and design of buildings helps to reduce the need for energy consumption, and how buildings have been made energy efficient thereby reducing carbon emissions.
- Policy DC 2: Health and Wellbeing - requires that developments of 100 or more homes are supported by a Health Impact Assessment as part of the planning application to explain how health considerations have informed design.
- Policy DC 3: Safeguarding Amenity – avoiding conflicts between neighbouring developments including from noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, vibration and emissions emanating from a use of land and buildings.
- Policy ENV 4: Green Infrastructure – offering protection of existing green spaces and requiring new residential and non-residential development to provide new green infrastructure alongside development.
- Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development – conserving and enhancing elements of biodiversity and geodiversity importance on sites with the aim of securing net gains for biodiversity as a result of development.
- Policy IN 2: Improving Access and Accessibility – promoting accessibility and permeability by creating places that are well connected with each other and with existing transport networks. Prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, bus and rail users to reduce the need for travel by private vehicle.

The development would affect amenity of existing residential properties.

Development proposals on the Skerningham Strategic Allocation site, and all other development proposals, will be required to adhere to the provisions of Policy DC 3: Safeguarding Amenity. The policy seeks to protect amenity of existing users of neighbouring land and buildings, and the amenity of the intended users, through careful siting, design and layout of development.

Recommended change to Local Plan:

Amend the final sentence of Policy H 10 to read: ‘The site design and layout will be required to ~~protect and conserve~~ and enhance the ~~Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monument~~ designated heritage assets on and adjacent to the site, together with their settings, in accordance with Policy ENV 1.’

Amend the second and last sentence of paragraph 6.10.11 to read: ‘~~Around~~Over 45% of the site area is expected to be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure ~~and~~ managed agricultural land and the relocated golf club, including a large as part of a wide green corridor ~~of land~~ on the south side of the River Skerne forming the river valley, and along the East Coast ~~mainline~~. In addition, further green space will be provided within the remainder of ~~Within the site, creating~~ an extensive network of green infrastructure ~~will be provided~~ connecting residential areas and community facilities, delivered in line with Policy ENV 4.’

Add the following sentence to Paragraph 6.10.12: ‘Development will be expected to improve the value and ecological mix of the River Skerne corridor in line with the measures set out in Policy ENV 7, and must follow the sequence of actions laid out in Policy ENV 8 to identify how the potential impacts of development on biodiversity can be avoided, or failing that adequately mitigated.

Delete paragraph 6.10.13: ‘~~Springfield Park is to be retained as part of the sites development. Provision is to be made for a new vehicular access across the eastern edge of the park designed so as to minimise its impact on the recreational value of the remaining parkland area. Satisfactory replacement green space is to be provided on the land immediately to the north of the park in line with the conditions of Policy ENV 4, along with suitable enhancements to the park designed in consultation with the local community.~~’

Amend paragraph 6.10.14 to read: ‘The site contains ~~a number of Listed Buildings, the Grade II Listed Skerningham Farmhouse, which was the home of the noted cattle breeder Charles Colling, and Low Skerningham cottage and stable.~~ The site is adjacent to the Ketton Bridge Scheduled Monument, and close to ~~the historic heritage~~ assets in and around the villages of Great Burdon and Barmpton. It is therefore necessary that the design and layout of development on the site conserves and enhances the significance of these assets and the contribution their rural settings makes to their significance in line with Policy ENV 1 and national policy. Also present on the site is the potential location of the deserted medieval village of Skerningham (indicated on Figure C.1: Area of High Archaeological Potential) and a burial site. Under the provisions of Policy ENV 1, development proposals on the Skerningham Strategic Allocation must be accompanied by an archaeological evaluation report.’

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Development will put a strain on the town’s already overstretched roads and services.

Transport modelling has tested highway mitigation schemes to ensure developments do not have an unacceptable impact on local and strategic highway network. Development of the Skerningham Strategic Allocation site will be required to deliver improvements to the existing

highways network, and new highway infrastructure, sufficient to mitigate the impact of development on the local road network.

Policy IN 1 confirms the Councils commitment to delivering an efficient transport system with a focus on the provision of infrastructure improvements to encourage greater use of sustainable modes of travel (including walking, cycling and public transport) leading to less reliance on single occupancy vehicle journeys. As set out in the policy and at paragraph 6.10.9, the Skerningham Strategic Allocation will be designed so as to enable bus access and circulation and will include improvements to the walking and cycling network connecting to and across the site.

See responses below relating to infrastructure requirements.

The road network is not suitable for the scale of additional traffic.

All of the principle vehicular access points already have bad traffic congestion during the morning and afternoon peak.

Even if a link road goes ahead, the traffic removed from the A1150 will simply be replaced by that from the Skerningham development.

The site could impact on junction 59 of the A1(M) and A66.

Object to any link road development.

Transport modelling work has tested highway mitigation schemes to ensure developments do not have an unacceptable impact on local and strategic highway network.

An application for the Skerningham Strategic Allocation site will need to be supported by an up to date Transport Assessment and Travel Plan in line with Policy IN 3 in order to minimise and manage the impact of development on the highway network and encourage more sustainable transport choices (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport and car share).

Plans for a Northern Link Road are being explored by the Tees Valley Combined Authority in conjunction with Highways England and Transport for the North. A link road will help improve east west connectivity across the Tees Valley and South Durham, linking the A1(M) more directly to Teesport, bypassing residential communities along the A1150 and A167. The link road will remove strategic vehicle movements from the urban area, and in particular a significant proportion of HGVs, reducing the level of pollution linked to these vehicles. Only the outer link road route is now being explored and this will be reflected in changes to the policy wording and supporting text.

The additional traffic generated by the development will cause congestion, air pollution, noise, and affect road safety.

See earlier comments relating to noise, air and light pollution.

The Highway Authority has powers to implement mitigation measures where highway safety is a concern on existing roads including speed limits, traffic calming, parking restrictions etc. The Highway Authority have also contributed to the site assessment process and will continue to be involved through to planning application stage of any allocations.

A new development must include adequate infrastructure and services.

As set out in the policy, the Skerningham Strategic Allocation will be expected to deliver a range of community facilities required to support the new residential population, providing for peoples day to day health, education and household needs. This will likely include schools, healthcare facilities, shops and green space.

Skerningham Strategic Allocation incorporates the NHS Healthy New Towns proposals, including a neighbourhood centre at the heart of the development. This will include provision for a doctors' surgery and pharmacy.

In addition, utility providers, public transport operators and the emergency services have been engaged during the development of the Local Plan to determine the capacity of existing services and facilities and to determine what improvements are required to support growth across the Borough. Required extensions / improvements to facilities and services will be delivered as part of the sites development.

There are significant infrastructure requirements needed but no indication of when they will be delivered.

The Council will publish an Infrastructure Delivery Plan alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan setting out the requirements for improvements to existing infrastructure / provision of new infrastructure to support the planned level and location of growth around the Borough. This document will provide an indication of the phased delivery of infrastructure, the cost involved and responsibilities for its delivery.

Development of the Skerningham Strategic Allocation site will be carefully phased so that new infrastructure and facilities are provided alongside, or where appropriate in advance of, new properties. Phasing will ensure that new communities are supported by appropriate infrastructure, and to minimise the pressure placed by development on existing services and facilities in the area.

Recommended change to Local Plan:

Amend criterion vii of policy H 10 to read: 'A local distributor road between the A167 and A1150 close to the Little Burdon roundabout, to include a crossing of the East Coast Mainline, and Safeguarded a corridors sufficient to enable the provision of the inner Northern Link Road route option or a local distributor road between the A167 and A66 Little Burdon roundabout, or/and, a connection across the River Skerne to the outer-Northern Relief Road route option across the River Skerne as required;

Amend paragraph 6.10.10 to read: 'The site will require the delivery of a new internal distributor road between the A167 north of Beaumont Hill and the A1150 close to the A66 Little Burdon roundabout. The specification of this road will be determined by the Transport Assessment submitted with a planning application for the site. As set out in the Transport and Infrastructure section and illustrated on the Key Diagram, there are aspirations to improve the strategic road network across the Tees Valley including the potential for a new Northern Link Road improving the connectivity between the A1(M) and the A66. Currently two possible alignments for the A business case, and detailed alignment and specification, for the Northern Link Road are being explored by the Tees Valley Combined Authority in conjunction with Highways England and Transport for the North, with a view to delivering the link road over the next 10 year. It is anticipated that the Northern Link Road will include a connection into the centre of the Skerningham Stategic Allocation site across the River Skerne both of which have implications for the Skerningham strategic allocation. Until the

~~route and funding for a Northern Link Road are confirmed, it is therefore important that the plans proposals for the Skerningham site do not compromise the delivery of the Northern Link Road, and make suitable provision for it in the masterplan for the site, either the inner or outer Northern Link Road route options (including a potential crossing of the East Coast mainline) and/or the provision of an internal distributor road.~~

Amend Figure 6.1 to show the potential route of the local distributor road and potential outer alignment of the Northern Link Road.

Delete Figure 6.2 from the Local Plan.

CONSULTATION

There has been insufficient public consultation regarding the proposals for Skerningham. Believe that public comments will not affect the outcome. There has been no consultation with local community groups on the proposals.

The concept of a strategic development on the north side of Darlington has been in the public domain for over two years and, during that time, there have been a number of opportunities for residents to find out more about what was being proposed and make their views known on the potential development and shape emerging plans for the area. The idea of locating strategic development to the north side of Darlington as part of the emerging Local Plan was first considered in the Council's Issues and Scoping document that was published for consultation during the summer of 2016. In November 2016, a report on the consultation was taken to Cabinet along with a paper setting out a proposed Local Plan Strategic Framework for Darlington, clearly identifying the North of Darlington as a strategic location for growth.

The Council has adopted a masterplanning approach to the development of strategic development proposals at Skerningham and Greater Faverdale. This is an appropriate approach to take to ensure that these significant development proposals are fully integrated with the town and respond appropriately to the particular constraints and opportunities of each site. The sites promoters, Theakston Land and Banks Group, undertook a consultation exercise during the Autumn of 2017 on early plans for Skerningham, distributing flyers to homes in the vicinity of the proposed allocation site, and holding a consultation event in the Harrowgate Club. As a result of that consultation exercise changes were incorporated to the emerging masterplan, including the removal of housing development from Springfield Park and the incorporation of increased separation distances from existing dwellings along Green Lane.

The Council undertook a six week public consultation on the Draft Local Plan during the summer of 2018, including proposals for the Skerningham Strategic Allocation. The consultation included a number of drop in sessions at the Dolphin Centre and attendance at locally organised events to publicise the plan and engage with local residents and businesses.

Additional engagement with the public and other stakeholders took place in January 2020 to inform them of the results of further traffic modelling work on the need for an access across Springfield Park and potential designs for a remodelled park. This engagement was

prompted by the request of Members for further work to be undertaken on this area of objection to the Draft Local Plan.

Information on the Local Plan process to date along with copies of reports and papers can be found at: <https://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/>.

Recommended change to Local Plan:

No changes recommended.