

LOCAL PLAN 2016-2036 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out the background to developing a locational strategy for Darlington's emerging Local Plan, with specific reference to identifying potential strategic development locations to grow and expedite housing delivery to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. It sets out the areas of the Borough which have been identified as having potential for delivering new houses on a strategic scale, and considers the most appropriate ways in which the Council can further explore that potential.

BACKGROUND

The Core Strategy, adopted in 2011, set out a locational strategy for the Borough to concentrate development in the main urban areas. In relation to housing, this meant development would be concentrated on previously developed land in the urban area, including Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe, and growth zones at the North West and Eastern Urban fringes. If sufficient dwellings were not delivered, it was planned that further sites would be released in sustainable villages and on the urban fringe.

As has been identified elsewhere, Darlington is pursuing a growth agenda which seeks to deliver 10,000 dwellings and 6,000 new jobs over the period 2016 to 2036. Since the Core Strategy's adoption, it has become apparent that the strategy it identified will not deliver sufficient dwellings to meet the Borough's need for new homes. This is partly due to under delivery in these locations, but also because the plan period have been extended until 2036 and the number of dwellings required in the Borough each year is higher than was previously being planned for.

In addition to ensuring sufficient land is available to deliver housing over the plan period, the Council must ensure there is a supply of sites which will deliver the homes needed in the short term, specifically over a rolling five year period. Whilst the housing requirement can be phased over the plan period, for example projecting that delivery will increase later in the plan period when new infrastructure is developed, it is important that the Borough's unmet housing need is met as soon as possible and the housing market continues to function effectively.

Whilst the Core Strategy's housing strategy will not deliver sufficient dwellings over the new Local Plan's plan period, and will particularly under deliver in the early years due to various site specific and housing market issues, it continues to be a sound plan for making the best use of land to meet a significant proportion of the Borough's housing need. Therefore, the sites which were identified to deliver this strategy through the Making and Growing Places DPD and the Interim Planning Position Statement will form the basis of the housing allocations in the new Local Plan. However, a new strategy will build on this approach to deliver the additional dwellings.

Consideration has been given to other means of increasing housing delivery, including exporting the Borough's housing requirement to other Local Planning Authority areas and pursuing development on previously unidentified green field and brownfield sites within the urban area and significantly

extending the Borough's villages. However, it is unlikely that pursuing these strategies will provide a realistic mechanism for delivering sufficient dwellings to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. Where there are appropriate sites in these locations, they will be assessed and considered for allocation through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and be part of a range of sites to give the plan breadth and deliverability, but cannot be the whole strategy. In some cases, local people may wish to take a strategic approach to growth in their neighbourhood through Neighbourhood Planning – the Council will support them in this endeavour in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement.

Where necessary, local authorities are encouraged to pursue large, strategic sites to deliver significant numbers of new dwellings - paragraph 52 of the NPPF supports this approach stating that *'new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale developments, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities'*. Darlington began taking this approach through the growth zones identified in the Core Strategy; options for further growth zones were explored through the Issues and Scoping consultation in summer 2016, with a view to taking a master planning approach to support delivery on the most sustainable large site or sites.

Following the consultation and call for sites, the submitted sites which appeared to have the potential to contribute to strategic housing delivery were categorised into the following broad locations or zones, and are highlighted on the map at Appendix 1:

- A new settlement to the west of the A1
A significant area of land to the west of the A1 was submitted to the Call for Sites as a potential new settlement. Other sites in this location have not been identified previously, however, should this option be pursued, it seems likely that other landowners in the vicinity could become involved to make the area a more regular and logical shape for development.
- South West Darlington
A small number of medium sized sites have been promoted to the west of Darlington between the existing urban area and the A1(M). These run from the emerging development of the North West Growth Zone at West Park, alongside the existing urban area as far as the A67. To the south of the A67, some smaller sites around Low Conniscliffe have also been promoted.
- South Darlington
A small number of sites were submitted to the south of the Borough, some adjacent to the urban area, others relating to the villages of Hurworth and Neasham.
- Middleton St George Village
Four sites within or around Middleton St George were submitted to the Call for Sites. The Council is also aware of a number of other development sites in the vicinity which are being promoted through the Planning process.
- North West Darlington
Sites in the north west of Darlington were collected around junction 58 of the A1, with a large site submission extending from the A1 into the Faverdale area to join the existing urban area.
- North and North East Darlington
To the north and north east of Darlington, a range of sites were submitted which would extend the urban area to the north. This included one large site to the north east, with a number of smaller sites making a cluster to the north around North Road, the A167.

ANALYSING POTENTIAL STRATEGIC SITES

The locations identified have been considered against a number of criteria in order to understand whether they would be suitable strategic sites and benefit from the Council and its various partners pursuing a master planning approach to demonstrate how they can be delivered. This was an exercise in determining the best route through the plan process to secure delivery on the most sustainable and deliverable sites, rather than an exercise where sites were competing to secure allocation in the Local Plan, which will take place later in the plan making process.

This assessment is a high level analysis of strategic factors, rather than a detailed consideration of particular sites, which will take place through the HELAA and master planning processes. Where site allocations are identified and in due course, allocated through the Local Plan process, many Borough wide policies will also apply to their development. This will include those relating to maintaining quality of development through design and infrastructure, but also those relating to existing features of the Borough which will be protected from negative impacts to varying degrees such as heritage, ecology and landscape.

Where sites have not been identified as being able to support strategic delivery through a collaborative master planning process, there are other mechanisms through which land owners and developers can pursue housing on their sites through the Local Plan. Most sites in this category will be assessed individually or in small clusters through the land availability assessment process. Those which offer the best compromise between sustainability and deliverability, in line with the Council's Local Plan vision and objectives, will be considered for allocation for housing development where appropriate. Neighbourhood areas and villages may choose to undertake strategic planning of their own local areas and make appropriate site allocations based on their local circumstances.

The questions which were asked of sites to determine their suitability as development locations for strategic master planning are included at Appendix 2 and reflect two key themes – would areas contribute to the national, regional and local visions being realised, and would they have potential to align with the Sustainability Appraisal Framework's objectives. The former of these includes the prospect of sites contributing to national priorities and agenda such as the promotion of early and sustained housing growth and regional priorities such as the Northern Powerhouse agenda and Transport for the North. Other considerations included the potential to contribute to sub regional priorities as identified by the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Local measures were drawn from the sustainability objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report and the vision and objectives developed following the Local Plan Issues and Scoping consultation over summer 2016.

South of Darlington

The area to the south of Darlington, between the main urban area and the River Tees (which represents the Borough boundary) was considered to have limited potential as a strategic site prior to the Issues and Scoping consultation in summer 2016. However, it was acknowledged that there was a significant area of land to the south of the Borough which is currently undeveloped and could have potential for development.

Only a small number of sites in the vicinity were submitted to the Council through the call for sites in summer 2016. Some of these were adjacent to the urban area, whereas others related to the villages of Hurworth and Neasham, to the south of this area, close to the Borough boundary.

The area which is currently undeveloped is split by the A66, a major road which forms part of the Strategic Road Network. There is limited capacity to develop new dwellings between the urban area and the A66, although some development sites had been identified through previous land availability assessments. The area to the south of the A66 is separated from the urban area by the major road, a boundary which currently clearly marks the extent of the urban area.

As the sites in this area are not strategic in form or scale, and there is limited potential to develop a strategic site which relates well to the existing urban form, they will be taken forward through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage, rather than being master planned as a potential strategic site.

New Settlement

Prior to the Issues and Scoping consultation, consideration was given to meeting the Borough's housing need through a new settlement, as encouraged in the NPPF. Given the location of existing development and physical features in the borough, a desk based study suggested that if a discrete 'new settlement' solution was to be pursued, it would probably need to be located in the rural areas to the east and west of the Borough. These areas were therefore suggested through the Issues and Options consultation; however, no specific locations were identified.

A very large site in the rural area to the west of the A1 was submitted to the 'call for sites' with a concept plan for the delivery of a significant number of dwellings – sufficient to meet all the Borough's housing needs over the plan period and beyond, should it be taken forward. This was put forward by one landowner and its configuration responds to a land ownership boundary, rather than physical features or a concept of urban form. It is likely that the shape would be refined and rationalised if it was taken forward as a strategic master planned site, meaning that other land owners and stakeholders would need to become involved in the process.

Developing a new settlement could have significant advantages including (but not limited to) providing a large number of dwellings over the plan period and beyond, alongside the infrastructure and services to meet its residents' needs, with limited impact on the existing services in the Borough. A new settlement would have the potential to include a mix of land uses, including employment and retail of an appropriate scale, enabling residents to access jobs and services in a sustainable fashion. In addition, the areas which could accommodate new settlements are likely to be relatively attractive to the market and therefore developers. Whilst significant developments have the potential to be environmentally damaging, a large, comprehensively planned site is more likely to be able to deal with issues strategically, reducing the impact of development by selecting the most appropriate areas within the site to be developed and providing mitigation where possible.

A new settlement would also have significant disadvantages which make it unlikely to be a suitable strategic option to deliver Darlington's housing requirements during the current plan period. One of the key findings of the Issues and Scoping consultation was the value local stakeholders place on Darlington's urban form – an historic market town surrounded by countryside and rural villages. This has been incorporated into the Local Plan's Vision and Objectives. The development of a significant new settlement would have a significant impact on the rural area, particularly to the west of the A1 and would mark a significant change to the urban form, expanding beyond the strategic road network and creating a new area of housing with very limited links to existing services and facilities.

Whilst a new community could be established within the new development, physical barriers would prevent easy links to the existing urban area.

The detached nature of any new settlement, and the rural nature of the new settlement proposed in particular, means that significant infrastructure would need to be established before dwellings could be delivered at any significant rate. This would include establishing a road network with connections to the urban area and the strategic network, but also schools, other Council services and utilities. The scale of a new settlement would be likely to support significant infrastructure in its own right, potentially including systems which require a critical mass of development to be viable such as renewable energy installations.

However, the time likely to be required to establish a master plan for a site of this scale and establishing new infrastructure means that it is unlikely that there would be new dwellings early in the plan period and could introduce viability issues which would further limit the sites deliverability. Whilst a new settlement could deliver significant numbers of dwellings over the medium to long term, it is unlikely to make a contribution to the authority's five year supply of housing land, increasing the pressure to find additional sites in the Borough which will deliver in this period.

As well as meeting other local objectives, including delivering new dwellings, the Local Plan will also respond to wider opportunities for growth, both in relation to specific sites and across the Borough and the sub region. It is not clear that a new settlement, particularly in the west of the Borough, would contribute to realising other opportunities for infrastructure development beyond those required to support itself. At this stage, the Council is not aware of any proposals which large numbers of new dwellings in this location would either support or be supported by.

It is acknowledged that a new settlement would provide a strategic scale site that could deliver a large proportion of the Borough's housing needs over the middle and later portions of the plan period with limited impacts in infrastructure elsewhere in the Borough. However, it is unlikely that there would be delivery early in the plan period, meaning additional sites would still need to be allocated to meet housing needs, including the backlog identified in the SHMA. Furthermore, the site suggested for a new settlement is unlikely to provide opportunities to meet local, regional and national objectives, beyond the provision of significant new housing. It would not take advantage of the proposed improvements to strategic highway links between the A1 and A66 referenced in the Infrastructure Plan for the Tees Valley and Transport of the North infrastructure plans. Therefore, it is not proposed to instigate a master planning process to deliver a new settlement within the Borough. Any potential sites in this area will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

Middleton St George

There has been significant interest in housing development in and around Middleton St George in recent years, which has resulted in a number of new homes being proposed and developed around the village. A Neighbourhood Area has also been designated in the village, with the Parish Council leading on producing a Neighbourhood Plan. As the area was experiencing significant change, the issues and scoping consultation sought views on whether the area should be planned with a view to it making a strategic contribution to housing delivery.

The response to the Issues and Scoping consultation in terms of site submissions was limited to relatively small disparate sites in separate land ownership, which are unlikely to yield strategic numbers of new dwellings or deliver a step change in infrastructure provision to support a much larger community.

However, as with other large villages, there may be scope for additional housing and associated social and physical infrastructure. Middleton St George will be considered in terms of how it can contribute to the vision and objectives in the Local Plan, but not as a site for comprehensive master planning to facilitate significant housing delivery. As the local community is already undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, it may wish to consider using this avenue to take a strategic approach to future development in the village. The sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

South West Darlington

This potential area for strategic scale development is lies between the A1(M) and the existing urban area, north of Conniscliffe Road. This area has been promoted through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment previously and considered for inclusion in the Making and Growing Places DPD, the predecessor to the new Local Plan which was withdrawn prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for examination. The sites identified were not included at that stage because other more sustainable sites were projected to deliver the required number of dwellings at that time. However, sites in this area have been resubmitted through the call for sites in summer 2016 and must be considered in the current context.

A significant number of dwellings could be delivered in this location, although constraints including the proximity of the A1(M), an HSE zone and various waterways in the vicinity are likely to reduce the developable area. Despite this, it is estimated that the sites submitted could deliver in excess of 1,000 dwellings in a highly marketable area, with potential to include a range of house types and tenures. This level of development is also likely to be able to support local facilities such as small scale retail and primary education. However, their relatively constrained nature and size of the site mean that they are less able to accommodate a range of uses including employment, retail and service; to do so would reduce the number of dwellings which could be delivered significantly.

Development on the sites submitted has potential to relate well to the existing urban area and reflect the Local Plan vision and objectives which seek to retain the compact urban form. The sites could access existing infrastructure and service provision in the town, including Darlington Town Centre. Combined with other sites on the west of the town, development in this area could also improve local transport links between communities by providing new routes around the urban area, reducing congestion at key junctions known to be operating at or over capacity.

This area has the potential to be a development location of some significance, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of local objectives. However the site's size and local constraints mean that it is unlikely that delivery in this area will be strategic in nature, or be significantly boosted by a comprehensive master planning process. Instead, the area will be part of the wider narrative of the Borough's housing strategy and the sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

North and North East Darlington

The area to the north and north east of Darlington's urban area has been identified by land owners and developers as having scope to accommodate residential development over a number of years. Numerous sites have been considered through the SHLAA process and some adjacent to the urban area were included in the Preferred Options drafts of the Making and Growing Places DPD. The area was included in the Issues and Scoping consultation as a potential northern extension to the town and numerous sites in this location were submitted to the call for sites during the summer of 2016. These included both small and large sites in a variety of ownerships, to the east and west of the A167 at Beaumont Hill, and to the north of Great Burdon and Whinfield at Skertingham.

A potential strategic site in this area would be defined to the south and west by the existing urban area and road network to the south and south west, but further to the north and northwest drawing a clear boundary is more complex. If a strategic site is to be pursued in this location, it would be necessary to determine whether the A167, the East Coast Mainline Railway or another boundary such as land ownership represented the most appropriate limit when embarking on the master planning process. The sites submitted also extend beyond the urban area to the north east in a large arc, and if taken forward in their entirety, would include development beyond the Skerne, a significant physical boundary. It may be that the full extent of these areas is too great for the current Local Plan's scope, and that more than one strategic site and master planning area is appropriate.

A mix of land uses could be delivered in this location, including employment and retail of an appropriate scale, growing Darlington's economy and enabling residents of the new development and the existing settlement to access jobs and services sustainably. A site of this size would have the potential to provide a significant number and mix of dwellings over the plan period and beyond, as well as green, social and physical infrastructure to support its occupants.

Significant development in this area would take the form of a large urban extension, maintaining the existing form of a main town and historic centre with surrounding countryside and villages, a significant Local Plan objective. The area has potential to make connections to the existing urban area and would be likely to encourage support of Darlington Town Centre as the Borough's main commercial centre, although appropriate links would need to be established to make this a reality. The proximity to the existing urban area means that infrastructure connections such as those to local road networks and utilities are likely to be possible early in the plan period, enabling delivery of development earlier in the plan period than more remote sites.

The Council is aware that the existing road network in this part of Darlington handles a significant number of vehicle movements which would usually be expected to use the strategic road network to travel between south Durham and Teesside, alongside the needs of local traffic. As well as making links to the existing local road network, a site of this size and scale would require an internal road network to support the land uses being accommodated there. It is likely that this new local road network could be configured and phased to support the alleviation of some of the issues on the wider local network in the medium and longer term.

Consideration has also been given to whether strategic sites could go beyond meeting Darlington's local needs and contribute to meeting sub regional and national goals. Highways England and the Tees Valley Combined Authority have both identified that the configuration of Darlington's road network has the potential to limit growth in both Durham and the Tees Valley, due to its importance

for movement between the A1(M) and Teesport. Darlington's local and strategic road networks are closely linked, particularly because the configuration A1(M) junctions to the north and south of the town encourage drivers traveling between the motorway and the Tees Valley to use local roads to complete their journeys. This results in lengthened journey times for travellers and increased congestion on routes to the north of the town, as well as issues associated with large goods vehicles travelling through predominantly residential areas to complete their journeys.

Planning the development of new dwellings in this location, along with an improvement or extension to the strategic road network, could assist in realising the delivery of both schemes. Whilst limited work has been undertaken to identify solutions to these regional transport issues, and no commitment has currently been made to selecting or funding a solution, the option of a new link between the A1 (M) and the A66 across the north of Darlington is being explored by the relevant agencies. This would provide a more suitable route for journeys which would usually be made on the strategic road network, benefitting the Tees Valley as a whole and have local benefits of removing strategic transport from the local road network. The combined benefits of boosting housing delivery and delivering key infrastructure make this a logical and coherent way to meet a number of objectives in a relatively short timeframe, with potential to bid for funding for key infrastructure aimed at bringing forward housing delivery.

However, a strategic site in this location would not be without significant challenges, given the scale of the site and the local constraints. As well as the use of green field land and the impact on the local landscape, it is understood that there are areas of flood risk, heritage and ecological value which would need to be taken into account through a master planning process. Other constraints may also be present on site which have not yet been fully explored - a number of these issues were raised by local residents in response to the Issues and Scoping consultation and the prospect of smaller sites being developed, as proposed in the various iterations of the Making and Growing Places DPD. These would need to be taken into account whilst undertaking a master planning process and could become risks to the delivery of housing on the site over the plan period. However, whilst significant developments have the potential to be environmentally damaging, a large, comprehensively planned site is more likely to be able to deal with issues strategically, reducing the impact of development by selecting the most appropriate areas within the site to be developed and providing mitigation where possible.

The northern and north eastern area of the Borough has potential to deliver a significant number of dwellings in the form of an extension to the existing urban area. The range of available sites and the proximity to the urban area makes it likely that some dwellings could be delivered early in the plan period. This would assist in meeting with local and national objectives for expediting and increasing housing delivery. There is also potential for providing new strategic infrastructure which would have a positive impact on economic growth both locally and sub regionally, and on the quality of the environment experienced by people living, working and travelling through the Borough. There are likely to be constraints which would need to be addressed if the site was to deliver housing on a strategic scale, either by being resolved or incorporated into the development. Consideration would also need to be given to how the site could be developed should new strategic infrastructure not be secured and further local infrastructure needed to be developed.

This area has the potential to be a housing development location of strategic scale, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of sub regional and local objectives, including the development

of strategic infrastructure and maintaining the Borough's existing urban form. However, there are a number of physical and infrastructure constraints in the vicinity which would need to be taken into account in developing the sites. A relatively large number of land owners, developers and other stakeholders have expressed an interest in the site's development. It is proposed that a comprehensive master planning exercise would be an effective way to explore the site's potential to be a key pillar of the housing strategy in the Local Plan, and to understand its suitability to deliver new dwellings over the plan period. In tandem with this, the individual sites will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

North West

Sites put forward in response to the 'Call for Sites' in the north west of Darlington were clustered around Junction 58 of the A1(M), with a large site submission extending from the motorway into the Faverdale area to join the existing urban area. Most of the land identified has been promoted for a number of years through the SHLAA process, or the Employment Land Review. A significant part of this cluster of sites was included in the Core Strategy as part of the 'North West Urban Fringe', although for employment uses rather than residential development (residential development was included in the growth zone, but further to the south). It was also included in drafts of the Making and Growing Places DPD and the Interim Planning position Statement as a potential employment land allocation.

The area has the potential to be a significant development location, with the capacity to contribute to achieving a number of local objectives, including the delivery of new houses whilst maintaining the Borough's compact urban form. To the east of the A1(M) in particular, there is potential for sites to relate to the existing residential areas, link into existing infrastructure (including relating to Darlington Town Centre). The site could also contribute to improvements to the Borough's network of infrastructure, including the local road network and providing new routes around the urban area. Alongside other development along the edge of Darlington, the site could also improve local transport links by providing new routes around the urban area, reducing congestion at key junctions known to be operating at or over capacity.

However, as the Council intends to continue to promote the majority of this area primarily as an employment site, a use particularly important for promoting and supporting economic growth, there is limited scope for promoting housing development through a master planning approach in this location. The area will be part of the wider narrative of the Borough's housing strategy and the sites put forward will be considered through the Housing and Employment Land Assessment process and considered for allocation through the Local Plan at the appropriate stage.

CONCLUSION

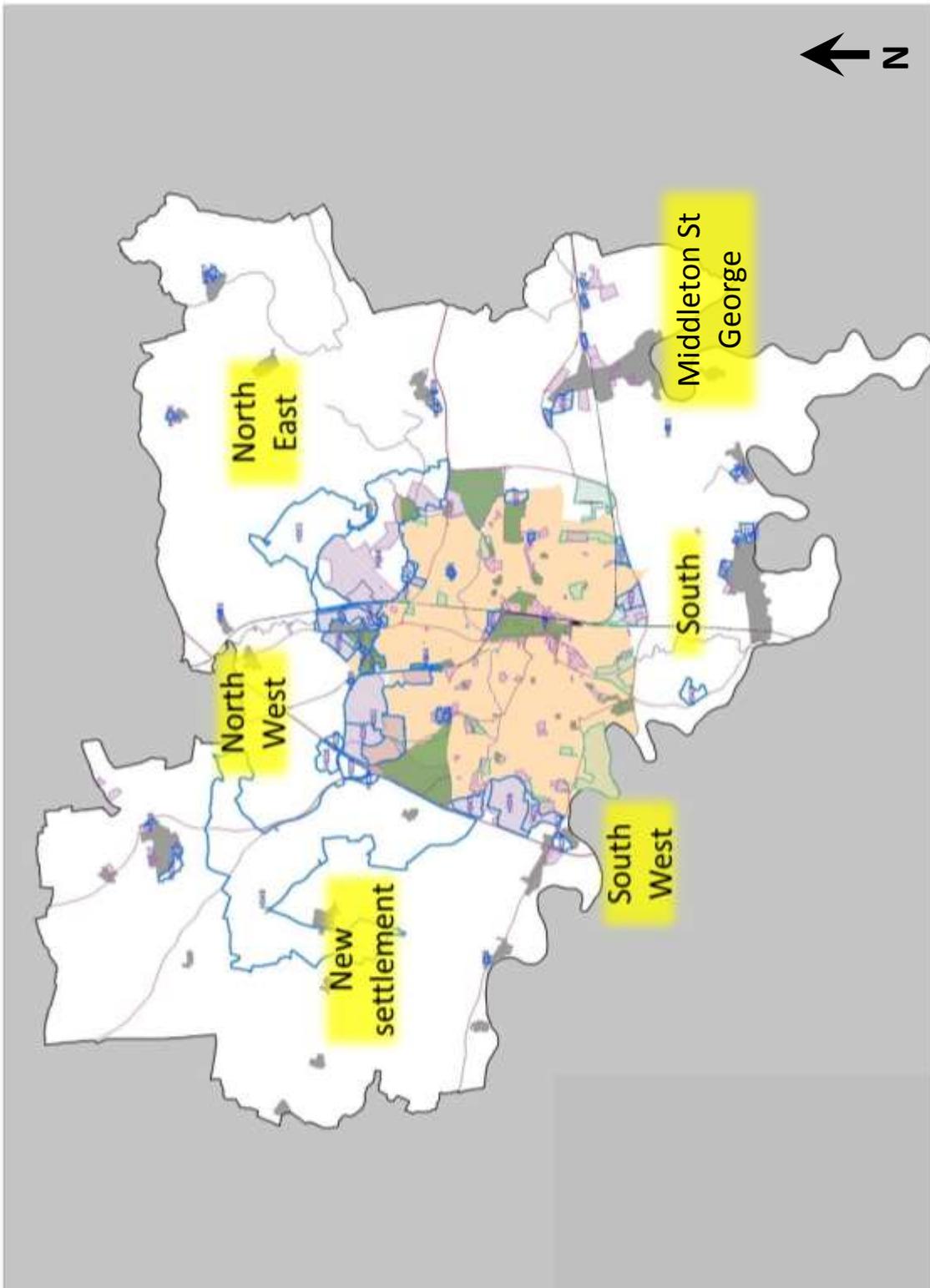
This paper sets out the background to developing a locational strategy for Darlington's emerging Local Plan, with specific reference to seeking strategic development locations to grow and expedite housing delivery to meet the Borough's housing needs over the next twenty years. It sets out the areas of the Borough which have been identified as having potential for delivering new houses on a strategic scale, and considers the most appropriate ways in which the Council can further explore that potential.

It is acknowledged that the Local Plan 2016 – 2036 will require an approach to housing delivery which goes beyond that proposed in the Council’s existing Core Strategy and the (now withdrawn) Making and Growing Places DPD. In most cases, the sites which were supported for allocation in those documents continue to offer the most sustainable options for meeting housing need and have been included in the Council’s Interim Planning Position Statement. However, they will not deliver sufficient dwellings over the plan period to meet the Borough’s identified housing needs. This paper has explored the ways in which various locations around the Borough could contribute to housing delivery on a strategic scale.

Given the need to expedite and boost the supply of housing to meet the Borough’s objectively assessed housing needs, the Council has explored the options for a locational strategy which will achieve this aim, taking on board the NPPF guidance that *‘new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale developments, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities’*.

Potential areas for strategic scale development have been assessed against a number of criteria to determine whether they will be taken forward into Stage 2 of the Local Plan process. It is recommended that the North, North East, North West and South West areas be the subject of further detailed analysis as part of developing the evidence base for the Local Plan. The proposed new settlement to the west of the borough is not considered appropriate as a strategic location. Similarly, Middleton St George is not considered strategic, but it is recognised that future development potential exists and should be considered through the HELAA and, potentially the Neighbourhood Planning processes.

APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC LOCATIONS WITH POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO HOUSING DELIVERY



APPENDIX 2: IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING STRATEGIC HOUSING SITES – FACTORS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Is it a strategic site?	
Site size	Is the site area/combined site area large enough to accommodate a significant number of dwellings – would their delivery be critical to the delivery of the plan
Nature of area	Is the site in an area where substantial change is occurring, will occur over the plan period or where substantial change could be accommodated?

National and regional objectives	
National and regional objectives	Will the site contribute to national and regional objectives such as accelerating housing delivery and the Northern Power House agenda.

Local Objectives	
Local regeneration objectives	Will the site/area contribute to existing local master plans/objectives
Local Plan aims and objectives	<p>create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride</p> <p>Protect, maintain and enhance Darlington's identity as a historic market town, set amongst countryside and surrounding villages with strong links to Railway, Quaker and industrial heritage.</p> <p>Maintain a vibrant, attractive and safe market town centre that embraces its historic character whilst functioning as a modern centre offering retail, culture, leisure, tourism and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The delivery of a distinctive place – cohesive market town surrounded by countryside and villages</p>

Housing and population	
SA Objectives	Can the site provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people families and older people?
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Will the site contribute to enabling the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough?</p> <p>Maintain a supply of land for new housing developments that meets the needs of the growing number of households? Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve and maintain a 5 year supply of housing land • Provide a range of housing products providing types and tenures of homes suitable for all people, including people who are unable to

	<p>access housing on the open market and for the boroughs aging population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a portfolio of sites of different sizes and delivery rates for the short, medium and long term
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Economy	
SA Objective	<p>Achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth and Increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it provide for opportunities to attract new business to the borough? • Will it facilitate the expansion and development of existing businesses?
Local Plan Objectives	<p>Will it contribute to facilitating sustainable economic growth of up to 6,000 new jobs within the borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the conditions to attract and retain investment, with a range and continuous supply of employment development opportunities in sustainable locations • Provide a choice and range of sites capable of delivering this growth. These will include established areas of existing economic development but also be flexible enough to be responsive to accommodate growth industries or the changing needs of established sectors. • Promote Darlington Town Centre as the main location for shopping, leisure, culture and employment and strengthen its role as a regional centre for such activities; • Diversify the rural economy to support businesses and existing communities whilst also protecting the boroughs valued open countryside. • Facilitate the delivery of strategic infrastructure that supports economic growth, including the supply of appropriate housing.
Tees Valley SEP	<p>Will the site/area help deliver the outcomes of the Tees Valley SEP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support innovation and sector development • Develop the workforce • Develop and provide infrastructure • Attract and retain wealth

Protecting our Climate and Reducing Energy Consumption	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Will the site support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development. Potential for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing flood risk; • generating and using renewable energy; • energy and water efficient;
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Is the area susceptible to flooding?</p>
SA Objectives	<p>Increase the borough's resilience to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, including by encouraging energy efficiency? • Will it increase renewable energy generation?
SA Objectives	<p>Protect and improve the quality of land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce contaminated sites and increase remediation? • Will it minimise the loss of greenfield land to development?
SA Objectives	<p>Avoid and reduce flood risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it follow the sequential approach to avoiding higher flood risk areas? • Will it include/encourage integrated drainage and rainwater harvesting?
SA Objectives	<p>Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it contribute to reductions in air quality monitoring pollutants at monitoring locations across the Borough? • Will it reduce the risk of contamination to ground waters?

Supporting the Countryside and Natural Environment	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	Will it maintain and enhance the character and appearance of our most valued rural landscapes? Development within and around existing urban areas will be expected to protect the boroughs rich and accessible existing green Infrastructure network.
SA Objectives	Will it protect and enhance biodiversity - Will it protect and enhance ecological networks, habitat corridors and linking routes?
SA Objectives	Will it protect, and enhance access to, green infrastructure and provide opportunities for sports and recreation Will it protect existing and / or enhance / create good quality and accessible green infrastructure or open spaces? Will it promote increased access to green infrastructure?

A Well Connected Borough	
Local Plan Aims and Objectives	<p>Will the site capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. Will it support delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new development is in places where it will be accessible to all particularly by public transport, cycling and walking. • Maintain and improve transport links between communities within the borough and further afield. • Support development that enhances regionally and nationally important transport links including those offered by Banktop Station, Durham Tees Valley Airport and Teesport. • Delivery of key utilities infrastructure, including broadband, will be key to success.
Local Plan aims and objectives	Will it help secure land/funding to deliver critically important new infrastructure?
Local Plan aims and objectives	<p>Create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure provision of necessary infrastructure to support growth including improvements to existing services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure convenient access to local goods and services • Ensure schools have sufficient capacity to support new developments within the borough and where necessary provide new provision in sustainable locations;
SA Objective	<p>Promote traffic reduction and encourage the use of public and non-motor transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce the distance people need to travel to work or to access services and facilities and will it prioritise development on well-located sites, especially the town centre? • Will it encourage the use of alternatives to car travel, including by protecting and improving walking/cycling routes and public transport routes?
TVCA Infrastructure Strategy	Enhance and retain Tees Valley's links to key cities, national and international gateways Improve road, rail and sustainable transport access to key employment sites

Supporting Cohesive, Proud & Healthy Communities	
SA Objectives	<p>Conserve Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it conserve designated and non-designated heritage assets and other elements of the historic environment? • Will it protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape, including by promoting good design? • Will it maintain separation between the main settlements in the Borough and those in surrounding districts?
Local Plan aims and objectives	<p>create and support cohesive communities through the provision of high quality development to create lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to green spaces for leisure and recreation • To build healthier homes and environments that support independence at all stages of life. • Tackle unhealthy environments by creating walkable neighbourhoods, delivering radically improved infrastructure for safe, active travel and more accessible public transport. • Create connected neighbourhoods, strong communities and inclusive public spaces that enable people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds to mix. • Design healthy workplaces, schools and leisure facilities that make the most of opportunities to encourage physical activity, healthy eating and positive mental health and wellbeing.