

Comment

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Event Name	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Regulation 19)
Comment by	Mr Neil Campling (1245333)
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Consultation Point	Policy ENV 6 Local Green Space (View)
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Files	East Mount Park 2
Question 1a	
Do you consider that the Local Plan is Legally compliant?	Yes
Question 1b	
Do you consider that the Local Plan sound?	No
Question 1c	
Do you consider that the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Cooperate?	No
Question 2	
Do you consider that this part of the Local Plan is unsound because it is not: (tick all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Positively prepared
Question 3a	
Your Comments	

Please give details of why you consider that this part of the Local Plan is not legally compliant or unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Cooperate.

It fails to support the Borough Council's long-standing commitment to preserve East Mount Park as open green space. The park meets the conditions of being close to the local community, is of historic significance (location of the estate of Edward Pease), recreationally used, is local in character & of limited extent.

Question 4

Changes Sought

Please Note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested change, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage. There is the opportunity to attach Word or PDF files before submitting your comment.

After this stage, further submissions will only be at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues identified for examination.

Please set out what change(s) to the Local Plan you consider necessary to make it legally compliant or sound. You will need to say why this change will make the Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording for any policy or text.

East Mount Park should be included in the map of Green Infrastructure and identified as a Local Green space.

Question 5

Attendance at Examination Hearings

If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate in the examination hearings? Yes, I wish to participate at the examination hearings

Question 5a

Participation at Examination Hearings

Please note the inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the examination hearings.

If you wish to participate at the examination hearings, please outline why you consider it to be necessary?

I am a representative of a local community group, Central Community Partnership, which has campaigned for many years to preserve the well being and environment of local neighbourhoods in the Town Fringe area.

Question 6

Do you request to be notified that the Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 22(3) of the regulations and to be notified of the adoption of the Local Plan? Yes, I request to be notified

Question 7

Please **upload any supporting documents** here. Please do not include any signatures or other personal data such as home addresses which you would not wish to see published on the Council's website.

East Mount Park 2



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



East Mount Park First Consultation Summary

As part of the initial public consultation on improvements to East Mount Park, under the Pocket Parks Plus scheme, a single-sheet survey questionnaire was hand-distributed to over 200 houses adjacent or close to the park. The distribution occurred on three separate days during the summer over a period of about a month. Doors were knocked on, and if residents answered, they were asked the survey questions in person. Otherwise, forms were posted through doors. In addition, a similar questionnaire was put up on the SurveyMonkey website so residents could answer the questions online if they wished. A total of 17 questionnaires were filled in. Due to the small number of responses, analysis of the survey is broken down into rough percentages rounded to the nearest 5%, to reflect opinion generally, rather than a spuriously accurate measure. A copy of the questionnaire is appended to this report.

About 60% of respondents were male and 40% female. No respondents identified as disabled. Some 40% were aged 60 years or over, a quarter of respondents each were in the age group 45-59 and 25-44 respectively. Only about 10% were young people, aged 17-24. Those who used the park were 45% close family of the respondent, and 15% respectively for the respondent's more distant family, their colleagues, or just the respondent themselves. One respondent (10%) felt that it was their pet that used the park. About 40% of respondents used the park daily, 20% weekly, but another 40% used the park maybe once a year, no longer used it or never. Some 15% of respondents used the park for less than 15 minutes, 40% each used the park for 15-30 minutes and 30-60 minutes respectively, and only 5% used it for over an hour. The small number of responses, their demographics, and usage patterns support the view that residents in the area mostly work all day, or because of late shift work, would not be available to use the park, and that the park, although nearby, is not well used by local residents.

People used the park for standard well-recognised activities including dog walking (30%), as a shortcut between the town centre and the college or other neighbourhoods (20%), a space to hang out with friends or eat lunch (20%), for children to use the play area (20%), and for games (10%). Respondents appreciated the park for its green open space (35%), for its wildlife (20%), because it was nearby (20%), for the children's play area (10%), and because it was a nice & small, quiet place unlike South Park (15%). When asked for ideas to attract more people to the park, 50% of residents offered no suggestions, 20% responded with "anything", 20% suggested more activities / facilities for children, and one respondent (10%) suggested regular events such as festivals with stalls. There was a total of 36 suggestions made by respondents for improvements to the park, and these have been shown as a word cloud (appended) with the size of the font representing the proportion of suggestions with respect to the total.

Respondent's use of the park, their appreciation of it, and suggestions for improvements reflect a rather fixed historic view of the role or place of a park in the community. Whilst the park is appreciated as a local green & open space, it is not yet seen as a local asset, as a place with which the local community would want to be more engaged, or in which to feel pride. Suggestions for improvements indicate the need for additional investment in the park to enable greater community engagement, i.e. lighting, benches, better access, and new features.

When asked to comment on the current Pocket Parks Plus improvements, 40% of respondents supported these and additional investment in the park, 25% supported better management of trees & undergrowth, which mirrored the 25% suggesting that park safety, especially after dark, should be improved (remove ASB & substance abusers from park). The remainder of comments focussed on the need to keep the park clean and well maintained. About 50% of respondents indicated they were willing to be more engaged with looking after the park. Some 40% said they would join a Friends of East Mount Park group, 20% would join litter picks in the park, 20% said they would help out with putting on or participating in events, and 15% would volunteer with gardening or planting activities in the park. One respondent suggested that children should be engaged more, and another offered chestnut trees from his back yard to plant in the park.

The first consultation, though small, with the community has shown that residents do value their local park, but there are real barriers to greater engagement. Disadvantaged neighbourhoods often find they are short on time and other resources to allow volunteering or engagement in park improvements. There is a perception of the park as a place that is less than safe, especially after dark, with ASB and dangerous litter (broken glass, needles, dog fouling). The park is not readily accessible to disabled people, with only the single central paved path available for wheelchairs or mobility scooters, and the steps up the slope problematic for people with even mild mobility impairment.

Finding ways to get the local community more involved with East Mount Park will be a long-term effort. One way might be to focus on conservation management of the natural flora and fauna of the park, which is highly prized by some local residents. New or improved footways in the park would make it more accessible to a wider range of people. Better boundary treatments & signing would draw attention to the park from passers-by and identify the park as a destination. Holding events in the park regularly would identify the park as a 'full member' in Darlington's community life. New features or facilities would also highlight the park, leading to greater use or appreciation of it. This initial survey is just the first step towards a more sustainable future for East Mount Park.

A word cloud of playground-related terms. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with 'Cleanliness' being the largest and most central word. Other prominent words include 'Maintenance', 'Conservation', 'Playground', 'Safety', and 'lighting'. Smaller words include 'Colour', 'Benches', 'Fencing', 'Dog-run', 'Obstacle-course', 'Road-crossing', 'Natural-play', and 'Raised-beds'. The colors of the words vary, including shades of purple, blue, green, and orange.

Maintenance
Conservation
Playground
Cleanliness
Safety
lighting
Colour
Benches
Fencing
Dog-run
Obstacle-course
Road-crossing
Natural-play
Raised-beds
Steps



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



East Mount Park Consultation

Groundwork NE are consulting with local residents and other users of East Mount Park to help shape the future of the park. We are working in partnership with Darlington Council and the Central Community Partnership to see how we can add value to the park and encourage more use of it.

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to answer the following questions so we can find out how people currently use the park, and how they would like to see the park improved. Answers to the questions will help to identify improvements, and what activities to prioritise. You can return your completed survey form to Natalie Whitworth, Groundwork NE, the Clock Tower, South Park, Darlington. Or you can complete an online survey form on <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6M3X686> . Please return completed surveys to Natalie Whitworth on, 01325 464270 . If you require further copies, have any questions or would like your form collected on another day, please contact Natalie on 01325 464270, or email natalie.whitworth@grounwork.org.uk.

1. How often do you visit the park? Please circle one.

Never visit	Once a month
Once a year	Once a week
A few times a year	Daily

2. For how long are you normally in the park? Please circle one.

Never in the park	Less than 15 minutes
15 to 30 minutes	30 mins to 1 hour
1-3 hours	Half a day or more

3. What are your main reasons for using the park? Circle all that apply.

Take a shortcut / cut a corner	Exercise, running, fresh air
Meet friends, hang out	Smoke or vape
Lunch break, to eat or drink	Use the children's play area
Make a phone call, use mobile	To see birds or wildlife
Ball games, throw Frisbee	Safe place for children to run about
Walk or exercise the dog	
Other activity or use. Please give details	

.....

4. Who else uses the park with you or that you know personally? Circle all that apply.

Children	Grandchildren
Partner	Other family
Friends	Exercise group
Colleagues or business associates	Pets

5. Are there any activities, events or features you would like to see in the park? Please state below.

.....

6. What do you most like or appreciate about the park?

.....

7. What improvements to the park would you like to see?

.....

8. Are you a resident of Darlington? Please circle: Yes No

9. How do you normally travel to the park? Please circle all that apply.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| On foot | Bus |
| By car | Bicycle |
| Mobility scooter or wheelchair | Motorbike |
| Other, please state | |
-

10. Which best describes your age?

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 16 or under | 17-25 |
| 25-44 | 45-59 |
| 60 or over | |

11. Are you: Male Female Rather not say/non-binary

12. Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please circle: Yes No

13. Would you like to be kept informed about what's happening with the park? Yes No
If yes, please fill in your consent and contact details at the end of this form.

14. Would you be interested in volunteering with any of the activities below? Please circle.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Planting bulbs or gardening type activities: | Yes | No |
| Litter picking: | Yes | No |
| Helping to put on or participate in events: | Yes | No |
| Joining a Friends of East Mount Park group: | Yes | No |
| Online support, maintaining a web page, crowd funding: | Yes | No |
| Something else? | | |
-

15. So you have any other comments about the park?

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Thank you for completing the above questionnaire, this data will be used to create an action plan for Eastbourne Park. If you are interested in being kept informed about improvements to the park we will keep your details on file and contact you with further information. **Your contact details will only be used to contact you to keep you informed about events or matters relating to Eastbourne Park.** This information would not be passed to anyone else without your explicit consent. Your information will be stored securely electronically by Groundwork NE & Cumbria on behalf of Darlington South Park Foundation. On 25 May 2018 the Data Protection law changed and **so we now want your specific express consent in order to process such information**, through completing and returning this form to Groundwork NE & Cumbria, Clock Tower, South Park, Parkside, Darlington, DL1 5TG. This is entirely your choice. Please be aware that you can: Refuse consent (and will be deemed to have refused if the form is not returned) or give consent now and the confirmation will be held electronically and the paper copy destroyed. You may withdraw consent, at any time and for whatever reason, by giving 7 days written notice to us by writing to Natalie Whitworth, Clock Tower, South Park, Parkside, Darlington, DL1 5TG. If you decided to not provide us with consent, or withdraw consent, this will mean you no longer receive communications from us.

I hereby give you consent to process my personal information: Yes No

Name:

Postal or Email Address:

Postcode:

Date:

Signature: