

## Comment

Consultee	Ms Julie Nixon (1164717)
Email Address	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Event Name	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Regulation 19)
Comment by	Ms Julie Nixon (1164717)
Comment ID	DBLPPS44
Response Date	05/09/20 16:59
Consultation Point	Policy H 10 Skertingham - Strategic Site Allocation (Strategic Policy) ( <a href="#">View</a> )
Status	Processed
Submission Type	Email
Version	0.8

### Question 2

**Do you consider that this part of the Local Plan is unsound because it is not: (tick all that apply)**

### 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.**

We would like to object to the proposed development of the Skertingham Garden Village (site 251), Great Burdon Commercial park (site reference 20?) and 392 and 28 as this will result in the loss of highly priced important green space and wonderful wildlife habitat. A garden village full of concrete and brinks, is not very green! This would also mean a loss of recreational facilities and pleasant scenic open aspect which is enjoyed and used by many residents both local and further afield. Development would also significantly alter the character and nature of what is currently a peaceful, green environment with available countryside on the edge of town which if ever lost will have a detrimental effect on the character of our lovely local area forever.

The Skertingham locality is an important habitat for plants, trees, animals, birds and insects and it protects the fragmentation and isolation of wildlife. It is therefore important to keep this green space as it is and enhance it rather than reduce it and destroy it which is an horrendous idea and would

massively impact upon nature let alone human wellbeing and health. Our mental health depends upon nature to function well.

The Development would also mean the loss of agricultural land and in effect taking vital future food supplies away and valued countryside as you are seeking to increase the local population, this does not make any sense. How on earth are we ever going to feed an ever increasing population. Another major concern of the Skertingham Development is the adverse impact it will have on the current, already full /excessive capacity, road network within our ward . This will increase safety concerns for road users, pedestrians and wildlife such as the declining hedge hog species alike due to the substantial increase in traffic and pollution. Not only that but one of the proposed access routes cuts across Springfield Park which will result in a loss of valuable parkland which will not be replaced within this ward and will be to the detriment of our residents.

Included as part of the Skertingham Development is Muscar House Farm, a green open space situated between Barmpton Lane and the River Skerne. Muscar House Farm offers valuable amenities to the residents of Darlington allowing access to the open countryside for recreational walks, picnic, families playing/ sun bathing, cycling and fishing all of which we have seen take place around here which indicates that this is an important locality in promoting health and well-being. Muscar House Farm has been the subject of proposed development for over 20 years including a judicial review on whether or not it should be developed. The answer then was no, and the answer today should also be no. Allowing access to the open countryside for recreational walks, an important facility in promoting health and well-being.

In 1997 a planning application to build 74 houses at Elm Tree Farm was refused, one of the reasons for this is that it would 'result in the loss of open land which makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area, provides an important link between existing open land and development and the open countryside, and provides opportunities for informal recreation'. Then why does the planning process keep on pursuing such applications?

If we are to adopt "healthy town principles" then we surely need to consider our environment and the nature within it and how our immediate and future behaviour can result in eternal environmental damage. We need to adopt long term environmental policy that considers the bigger picture of our environment and climate change we will die but we can save others from destruction. What we damage today will be damaged for generations. It is not ethical to build just to support the economy we need to come away from the "right here right now concept" when our environment and our world is in such trouble. Our planet is to sustain human and wildlife but we seem to think it is all our call but it is not we need to have a conscience. In all honesty why do humans think we have the upper hand in the decision making of what we are willing to destroy. We are not god/or some other higher power! We need to stop and think before it is too late. Any building locally or further afield should stick to brown field and other unused / already damaged sites. Any new builds need to adopt green principles and building only what is needed and where it is needed should be a strategy adhered too or we could be left with another white elephant. The governments build, build, build program is not sustainable and we need to address this with our local authorities paving the way and standing up for the right thing!

Take for example Ingleby Barwick formally a agricultural site with a forever increasing population and this seemingly eternal developing housing estate of which became the largest in Europe. Something to be proud of? We don't think so having lived there as younger ignorant individuals, when reflecting on this as mature people who have seen the error of their ways we now feel sadness for buying into a new development because we now appreciate this will have inevitably resulted in loss of wildlife habitat and loss of agricultural. We also witnessed on a daily basis for at least three years the increased traffic and pollution that arose due to over planning and ineffective road systems as many working residents endured such congestion at peak times whereby it would take at least an one hour of cueing just to leave or get into the actual place without the travel to work.

Adding 4,500 new houses all using the same few roads such as Barmpton Lane and A1150 would result in our earlier real life example with terrible noise and pollution and associated health problems for residents resulting in breathing difficulties such as asthma and lung cancers etc this of course having further potential implications with the COVID pandemic circulating too. I acquired asthma as a young adult whilst living there. We actually live and breath this locality each and every day and therefore are the people that should be listened to and be validated as this would severely affect the quality of life if residents. We already have limited services such as doctors and schools etc. We also need to bear in mind the implications of COVID of health and functioning as this is likely to be with us for some years, people are going to be back in their cars and avoiding public transport due to potential virus implications so this will add even further traffic to our roads. Also whilst we are on the subject of the pandemic we will need more space now more than ever just to feel safe and narrow pathways and cut through some etc in developments would not promote social distancing is there anything in the plans to bear in mind these new factors and new ways of living?

Furthermore, who is going to fill these houses ? we are a reducing population with an average age of 41 years old, what is wrong with a town getting a little smaller. Bigger is not better! As Darlington is aging we might need new accommodation to suit older people. Scientists have said for years that our plant is over populated resulting in over consumption, additional pollution resulting in Anthropocene. If you need money for council services perhaps you could make it more touristy if necessary to but not everyone needs to live and work here! After all, our current COVID situation has led to further unemployment is not going to be helpful. We really don't want our town changing to a very large scale town as it would change what we like about here. Do others really want to become city dwellers? I know we don't we seek peace and solitude. In so far as commercial business and industry please keep business builds away from residential areas this is not a good model to follow (see Bowesfield in Stockton it doesn't work and it is not only bad on the eye it has safety implications too around traffic, children /nature etc). Keep all new large /commercial businesses together i.e. near amazon as this area is now already ruined, (it is a blot on the landscape and has changed the skyline character if the area which can be seen from many local walks). Why scatter it everywhere?

The setting up of new business now needs to be addressed sensitively and with a greater assurance they can out last in this COVID climate as old and established businesses continue to fail resulting in redundancies. New businesses are potentially even more unstable, so new commercial sites could become another white elephant too with little/reduced/or no need for them. This too would have potential implications on the type of employment on offer and may result in more temporary or contract work or businesses folding this subsequently needs to be addressed first before any planning permissions are allotted after all this would mean cheaper housing might be more desired or commercial sites no longer needed for example. Sure, building keeps some people in work for longer but when the land is gone the employment also might be like a puff of smoke too? And there may be alternatives to building new homes, such as filling empty houses but refurbishing these to greener models with improved standards, building on brownfield sites rather than the many nasty inferior privately owned often street houses.

The carbon footprint of building a new two bedroomed house has been calculated at 80 tonnes (over eight times a UK citizens' current average annual footprint, which has to be reduced by 80 per cent by 2050). This direct carbon cost of building new homes is only the tip of the iceberg. We had a record year last year whereby 217,000 houses were build, it is ludicrous to continue in vane like this. We realise this has bigger political implications and due to this we will also send this objection to our local MP.

You quote "Around 45% of the site area is expected to be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure" this means they will be 55% development! We don't have any building now which is better for the environment and better on the eye! We also need floodplains around rivers and as a result of our climate changing it would be ludicrous to build such developments as we need this land to absorb any additional rains, we need 150 metres in depth in order to create at least viable ecological corridors, providing movement corridors for wildlife within the landscape, 50 meters will be more like

a path that will be shared with humans and nature like to avoid human contact where possible and dogs being taken out for walks.

It would be nice to retain the rural character of the villages of Great Burdon, Barmpton and in between as people visit here to walk in the valleys, countryside to enjoy the rural setting with scattered period farmsteads and their historic, wildlife features, golf course and old and new woodlands too. According to the Darlington landscape character assessment 2015

<https://tinyurl.com/y5rml3sq> (Darlington Landscape Character Assessment)

River - Around Barmpton there is another concentration of woodland on steeper slopes, with riparian woodland continuing to be a feature as far as Great Burdon. The habitat value of the woodland is augmented by other habitats including wetlands and former quarries, and Redcar Field, protected as a SSSI for its fen meadow vegetation. The dense network of paths is well used by local residents, with car parking available for Skerningham woods. Generally the valley has an intimate, tranquil character, particularly around Barmpton and other areas with limited road access. Traffic noise in the north, the more intensively farmed areas, and the urban fringe to the south, all locally reduce tranquillity. The landscape pattern conveys a sense of time depth where traditional buildings remain, Strategic green corridor 3: River Skerne includes the whole of this character area within the 1km buffer of the river. Key sensitivities within this landscape include:

- 1) Enclosed and often well-wooded character;
- 2) Intimate, tranquil valley landscape of small scale;
- 3) Overlooked from key transport routes;
- 4) An important recreational landscape with a dense network of accessible routes;
- 5) Historic features along the valley including buildings, bridges and quarries; and
- 6) Strategic green corridor providing connections for wildlife and habitats.

In the south, the Skerne helps to maintain the separate character of Great Burdon, and forms an important green corridor leading into the built-up area of Darlington. Aside from the elevated land around Skerningham mentioned above, the Upper Skerne Valley is of generally higher sensitivity .

Other considerations are also required to take the many existing houses that would have been available to first time buyers and others seeking affordable housing are often bought up by people making money from second homes, holiday homes, property developers, foreign investors which can promote greed, excessive or additional incomes of which properties can be sat idle for months and even years and it is believed that these will continue to increase over the next decade. Perhaps this indicates that the only houses that should have planning permission are those built for the owners that are going to live in them for a minimum period or those bought by housing associations who allocate them to people who need them, this would prevent investors, sky high rents, unnecessary building; housing should not be a replacement for the stock market. We need to address this wider issue, housing built only for those that need them, this should be guaranteed in light of our ongoing environmental disasters. This would be a better guarantee that ghost estates of newly built houses would not happen either as this is an issue in other parts of the UK.

## Document Change Required

No

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Event Name	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Regulation 19)
Comment by	Ms Julie Nixon (1164717)
Comment ID	DBLPPS45
Response Date	05/09/20 15:59
Consultation Point	Policy H 1 Housing Requirement (Strategic Policy) ( <a href="#">View</a> )
Status	Processed
Submission Type	Email
Version	0.4

### Question 2

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We would also like to highlight that your council predictions are that 150 people will migrate to Darlington each year if this is the case only build what we need - The target of your "aspirational" local plan identifies 492 dwellings per annum however, not the 177 which is considered more probable. Therefore it appears that the standard methodology set out by Government is not been used adequately and does not reflect the house building numbers in all reality.

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Event Name	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Regulation 19)
Comment by	Ms Julie Nixon (1164717)
Comment ID	DBLPPS46
Response Date	04/09/20 16:59
Consultation Point	Site 392 - Elm Tree Farm ( <a href="#">View</a> )
Status	Processed
Submission Type	Email
Version	0.8

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The Development would also mean the loss of agricultural land and in effect taking vital future food supplies away and valued countryside as you are seeking to increase the local population, this does not make any sense. How on earth are we ever going to feed an for ever increasing population. Another major concern of the Skerningham Development is the adverse impact it will have on the current, already full /excessive capacity, road network within our ward . This will increase safety concerns for road users, pedestrians and wildlife such as the declining hedge hog species alike due to the substantial increase in traffic and pollution. Not only that but one of the proposed access routes cuts across Springfield Park which will result in a loss of valuable parkland which will not be replaced within this ward and will be to the detriment of our residents.

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