

## Comment

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<b>Event Name</b>	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Reg. 19) Sustainability Appraisal
<b>Comment by</b>	Middleton St George Parish Council (Cllr Catherine Gilsenan - 1164352)
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<b>Nature of response</b>	
<b>Do you agree with this content?</b>	Object

### Please tell us why

The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal analyses the pros and cons of Middleton St George as Strategic Development Option 8 (see pages 271 onwards). However, there are certain factors that need to be taken into consideration:

1. 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. In

terms of level and type of housing, in particular affordable housing, the NHA Assessment for Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following:

- Of the 136 dwellings that are identified as being needed over the plan period, 27 affordable housing units should be delivered. This is lower than the 38 households that are projected to need affordable housing to rent over the same period. - If the six major sites currently proposed to be allocated in the plan area in the emerging Darlington Local Plan, which total 731 dwellings, are delivered, 146 Affordable Housing units will be provided on the basis of the local plan policy requirement, is well in excess of local need;- There is a need to improve affordability in the plan area across all tenures.

The Plan should provide the type of houses that the village needs, not those that developers choose, thus ensuring that villagers are able to stay within the village if they wish throughout their lives, as opposed to just providing commuter housing

## 2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities

With all the additional housing in Middleton St George, there has been no improvement to the village centre, or to the community hall from planning obligations, due to the fact that DBC still use s106 negotiated between DBC and the developers, rather than using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which has still not been introduced, but would be much more targeted towards the community.

## 3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.

Development at the level planned/proposed will increase pollution by substantially increasing car journeys while limiting the opportunities/desire for safe, active travel as a result of the increased traffic numbers, especially at peak times. Service traffic will also increase. Pedestrians and cyclists will be discouraged and endangered by increased traffic levels. Alternative options of public transport have limitations: infrequent bus service and the rail station is not within easy reach of everyone. The current transport infrastructure would be unable to cope and there is little scope for highway improvement on these village routes.

## 4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.

During the scoping stage of the Local Plan, Darlington Borough Council stated that development in the village will be required to make a contribution to new education provision to accommodate the needs of future residents, and that this may be through a new facility with potential links to St Georges Primary School.

Since the start of the emerging plan period, significant development has already necessitated an extension to the existing primary school building in order to cater for the additional children. However, any further development would require an additional primary school to meet the demands of planned development which could see an increased population of nearly 50%. Secondary and further education is provided elsewhere and access to this will involve additional travel and traffic to and from the village.

Site 146 on the Policies Map now has outline planning permission is for 330 houses plus space for school and retail units. The emphasis is on "space" for school. Planning permission is not dependent on securing an actual school building (or the funding provision for such by education bodies), as no guarantee of such is required to enable planning permission. In the current planning environment, school places follow on afterwards (or don't, as the case may be, as we have seen before) (i.e. plan for housing first, then that will provide the schoolchildren), not the other way round, or so we are told. However, there is never any guarantee. Usually, what we find is that facilities don't happen, but more housing does - to fill the gap left, which is what happened for site 230 (where a GP surgery was initially envisaged, now all housing). The Local Plan must be supported by an infrastructure delivery plan to set out what infrastructure is required to be delivered to support the proposed strategy. There is no infrastructure delivery plan, strategy, or evidence of any kind in the Local Plan to justify a) the need for the level of housing in the first instance, and b) a level of infrastructure to cope with it.

## 5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.

- Most of the housing allocations and commitments (permissions) have been located in the centre of the village. This has been unacceptable, having no access and egress other than via the centre of the village, and adding to congestion and pedestrian hazards. This is a significant restraint. 6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities

Any employment opportunities achieved would be mainly located outside of the village and commuting will increase, generating a considerable increase in road traffic, with public transport being a lesser part of that, in the absence of a more frequent bus service.

The village of Middleton St George should not be permitted to become merely a commuter or dormitory village, but should retain its character as a separate village, ensuring that its residents can remain in the village. Middleton St George is only (and should only be) capable of sustaining village-centred small scale enterprises, but by no means should it become a dormitory village.

7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.

Opportunities for sustainable travel, in the form of bus and rail journeys, walking and cycling, will be restricted. As a result of substantially increased numbers of dwellings the additional vehicular traffic generated, in the form of private car journeys, means that personal considerations of road safety will discourage active travel and public transport cannot currently meet all of these needs. The existing bus service needs improved frequency and route revision.

We have asked for an improved public bus services in terms of reliability and frequency including links to Yarm. This has still not happened, despite the incredible amount of new housing already granted permission. The service frequency should be improved (i.e. half-hourly rather than hourly), and include evenings and Sundays, and the service should be enhanced to link local villages with connections to Darlington and Yarm. Perhaps on a trial basis. The viability test for this should not depend on the village having to say "yes" to yet another vast housing development, which seems to be the case at the moment (which is seemingly why the service has not yet been improved).

8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.

Increased vehicular traffic and congestion will increase greenhouse gas emissions

9. Make the most efficient use of land and resources.

The proposed development involves the loss of mainly good, agricultural land. There is however, one partly brownfield site allocated. Empty properties within Darlington urban area could be used first.

Unjustified is: the number of houses already granted permission in the village far outweighs the number and type it needs, and the unreasonableness of granting permission for more in proportion to other areas of Darlington, especially given the fact that the village fails two sustainability factors criteria (the location of the GP Practice and the inadequate bus service), there are brownfield sites within Darlington to develop, and empty properties within Darlington could be refurbished first

The density of development should be appropriate to the location within the village. This has not been the case. Several developments have been squeezed into small areas (e.g. Yarm Road/Killinghall Row, development adjacent to Oak Tree Inn, just to name two – sites 230, 386 and 384 on the Policies Maps 13). Density and type of housing should be in keeping with adjacent established developments.

10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.

Again, there will be considerably increased traffic levels which will create extra noise, vibration and light pollution.

11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.

Residents report inadequate surface water drainage in certain areas on village routes, which is historic, and new development will substantially increase run-off. This issue needs addressing.

13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

The proposed level of development is likely to place recreational pressure on, and disturb, areas of nature conservation (nature reserve). Some loss of biodiversity and habitats is inevitable when building on these (mainly) greenfield sites. The Plan must require that new developments provide enhanced biodiversity and replace lost wildlife habitats.

14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.

The need to preserve the green gaps and green environment within and around the village, thus ensuring and preserving its character as a village, and not as a dormitory village - The great importance of preserving green space in and around the village in order to help preserve its character (hence the Designated Green Spaces, as proposed)

## 16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment.

The Plan needs to acknowledge the historical significance of the track bed of the Darlington and Stockton Railway and its associated buildings in Middleton St George. There is an active plan, involving all the communities alongside, and including MSG Parish Council, to create a long distance walkway following the path of the railway and it will become a visitor attraction, with Middleton St George being a key point. Any new development nearby should be designed to enhance and preserve this historical asset. This and a commitment to protecting the Nature Reserve along its route should be included specifically in the Plan.

We wish to quote, and support the comments of Friends of the Earth in response to Darlington Borough Council's Spatial Plan for Middleton St George, which evidence the unsustainability of the village for such vast development, and were as follows: "Middleton St. George experiences very poor public transport links. New housing will only exacerbate car demand and current road congestion. We are concerned with the capacity of the road network, existing NHS services including GP practices and schools to absorb this growth. We would urge ecological surveys to be undertaken in April - June to confirm the current status of all breeding species and to help mitigate and offset the effects of any habitat loss. Development within flood plain areas should be avoided. Over 400 extra homes have received planning approval here since Nov 2015 with 350 new dwellings recently approved (Aug 17) close to the airport. This latest development included a planning condition to impose operational restrictions on the airport. How does this fit with the Tees Mayor campaign to buy back the airport into public ownership? The building of new homes is within close proximity to the Whinnies Local Nature Reserve with its rare grasses and plants. The site holds red and amber listed birds and is good for insects. Whilst we are keen to encourage visitors to our green spaces and local nature reserves we are concerned that building next to this and other local nature reserve (e.g. Maidendale), will increase the risk of disturbance from residents / dog walkers and lead to a loss of biodiversity."

Commentary (p.283 onwards)

We disagree with the objective of the plan to consider that Middleton St George should provide a substantial proportion of the housing for the Borough of Darlington due to the fact that there seems to be no justification as to why a total of 1244 dwellings is planned for Middleton St George, especially given that there is no justifiable evidence that it can be regarded as a sustainable "service village" (see our comments on SH1). Middleton St George SA Site Options (p.560 onwards)

The parish council agree with Darlington Borough Council's (DBC) published assessment of sites 067, 108, 309, 373 and 388 that the sites are not suitable for housing (and therefore should also not form part of the settlement boundaries).

It is noted that a number of the sites have planning permission: 045; 065; 089; 146; 230; 384; and 386. Planning applications are currently pending consideration for sites: 099 and 375.

The parish council does not consider sites 099 and 375 are suitable for development. Site 099 has a number of constraints, including: access, flooding, infrastructure capacity and impact on historic assets (namely the Cades Roman Road). Highway's England objected to the proposed site allocation within the emerging local plan as a result of potential impacts on the strategic road network.

With regard to site 375, it should be noted that officers within DBC's policy team are recommending that the site should not now be allocated for housing development as they consider there are issues with access and amenity, which they are not convinced can be overcome. In addition, Highway's England objected to the proposed housing allocation within the emerging local plan.

Previous parish council responses to the pending application for the development of site 375 illustrate that there are significant access and highway infrastructure capacity issues. The proposed access to the site is not within the same ownership and would only be able to be provided at this point if number 20A The Greenway was purchased and demolished. It is also considered that the proposed access route does not and could not meet the council's highway standards in terms of width of road to be provided and the provision of the required footpaths. Traffic survey data illustrates that the development of the site could cause result in significant highway safety issues. The site has archaeological constraints as a result of its relationship with the Roman (Cade's) Road. In addition, the development of the site is likely to impact on the character of the historic village of Middleton St George. As a result of the deliverability and suitability issues, the sites are therefore not considered appropriate for inclusion within the settlement boundary and should therefore be discounted.

Site 374 is considered suitable by the DBC but there is no planning permission in place. Site 374 lies on the edge of the built up area and is rural in nature. The Parish Council would be opposed to development on this site due to the already overwhelming number of housing permissions granted, as well as because of its location on the edge of the built up area and would constitute encroachment into the countryside.

**Conclusion:**

The strategy of the Local plan is not positively prepared because it is planning for too much housing growth – i.e. it is not seeking to meet the needs of the area, and what is being proposed is not sustainable e.g. environmental impacts are not appropriate as the level of growth is not necessary.

With regard to justification –it is appropriate to plan for some growth, but it should not be excessive. Similarly, the strategy in terms of the distribution of the level of housing development to MSG is not justified or appropriate, given the nature of the parish and its constraints (particularly the historic environment and highways infrastructure). There are clear reasons why it is not justified.

In terms of effectiveness – the strategy is not effective, as the level of growth is too high and it is not supported by appropriate infrastructure necessary to deliver the strategy.

The strategy of the Local Plan is not consistent with national policy because it is planning for housing growth well in excess of that which is needed when applying the standard national housing methodology.

The proposal to include the Station Road site (site 99) is not sound as it is not positively prepared, not necessary and not justified. It is not needed to deliver the housing allocation and there are significant constraints to development.

The Draft Local Plan does not adequately address any of the above, and we would urge the Borough Council to ensure that it does by incorporating all of the above points, and addressing the issues outlined in this response.

**Change sought:**

That the Sustainability Appraisal is updated to reflect the information provided in the above comment, having regard to the attached supporting documents.



Middleton St George Parish Council

Middleton St George

Traffic Survey

Neasham Rd and Middleton Lane

January and February 2019

## Background

The Parish Council of Middleton St George own a traffic monitor system which uses Houston Radar to measure speed of oncoming traffic and to measure volumes of vehicles passing the monitor.

The system is marketed in the UK by Unipart Dorman and the model we possess is the DF11.

We normally use the unit to measure speeds of traffic on one of three locations in the village.

- a) Yarm Rd (30mph)
- b) Middleton Lane (30mph)
- c) Station Rd (40mph approaching 30mph)

We are able to re-locate the portable unit to other areas of the village and secure it to poles/lampposts to monitor traffic.

The system is battery powered and needs to be recharged about every 2 weeks. The data from the unit can be downloaded using Bluetooth Technology to a receptive computer near to the unit.

Once the data is captured it can be analysed using Houston Radar Stats analysis software and tables and graphs can be produced showing speeds of vehicles or vehicle counts.

## The Purpose of this survey

There has been some concern over the volume of traffic travelling along Neasham Rd to and from the junction of Middleton lane and the volume of traffic moving from this junction up Middleton Lane towards the centre of the village

To try and analyse these traffic movements a survey was conducted in January and February of 2019.

Firstly the Unit was positioned on Neasham Rd before the junction with Middleton Lane and traffic was monitored from

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 until Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019.

The Unit was repositioned on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 after the Neasham Rd /Middleton Lane junction and traffic was monitored until Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The data captured was analysed and tables and graphs produced

## The First Analysis on Neasham Rd

Firstly counts were taken for each week :

Hour	Monday 14/01/2019	Tuesday 15/01/2019	Wednesday 16/01/2019	Thursday 17/01/2019	Friday 18/01/2019	Saturday 19/01/2019	Sunday 20/01/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	*	*	1	3	4	4	5	2.7	4.5	21.7
1-2	*	*	0	3	0	5	1	1	3	25
2-3	*	*	1	1	0	1	0	0.7	0.5	17.5
3-4	*	*	1	3	3	6	2	2.3	4	18.3
4-5	*	*	5	4	5	2	2	4.7	2	18.6
5-6	*	*	13	12	20	5	8	15	6.5	19.2
6-7	*	*	44	34	47	12	10	41.7	11	21.1
7-8	*	*	140	159	137	32	16	145.3	24	19.6
8-9	*	*	264	276	233	69	31	257.7	50	18.1
9-10	*	*	117	103	117	83	57	112.3	75	19.2
10-11	*	89	74	92	85	88	92	85	90	20.2
11-12	*	100	99	112	118	112	109	107.3	110.5	19.6
12-13	*	103	103	121	125	114	124	113	119	19.5
13-14	*	82	108	86	77	121	152	88.3	136.5	19.4
14-15	*	124	91	97	123	99	112	108.8	105.5	19.5
15-16	*	213	156	188	195	84	120	188	102	18.1
16-17	*	152	141	162	124	77	87	144.8	82	19.6
17-18	*	115	132	121	134	115	47	125.5	81	19.4
18-19	*	96	73	94	93	51	40	89	45.5	19.9
19-20	*	50	53	95	69	62	44	66.8	53	20.4
20-21	*	44	27	36	40	31	29	36.8	30	21.2
21-22	*	17	20	28	28	16	14	23.3	15	21.9
22-23	*	14	12	15	16	19	10	14.3	14.5	21.1
23-24	*	7	5	9	12	21	6	8.3	13.5	21
Totals	0	1206	1680	1854	1805	1239	1118			
% of Total	0%	13.5%	18.9%	20.8%	20.3%	13.9%	12.6%			

Hour	Monday 18/02/2019	Tuesday 19/02/2019	Wednesday 20/02/2019	Thursday 21/02/2019	Friday 22/02/2019	Saturday 23/02/2019	Sunday 24/02/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	9	3	5	11	8	21	30	7.2	25.5	22.3
1-2	2	1	3	1	2	11	6	1.8	8.5	18
2-3	0	1	2	0	1	2	7	0.8	4.5	20
3-4	3	3	1	0	0	2	2	1.4	2	25
4-5	2	3	2	3	1	4	2	2.2	3	23
5-6	10	12	11	11	8	6	3	10.4	4.5	21.8
6-7	35	38	21	28	29	7	5	30.2	6	19.8
7-8	90	83	76	85	62	28	12	79.2	20	19.4
8-9	203	222	216	237	164	78	47	208.4	62.5	18.2
9-10	211	192	210	227	204	114	77	208.8	95.5	18.1
10-11	226	226	211	206	225	207	169	218.8	188	18.1
11-12	181	175	183	173	213	210	194	185	202	17.8
12-13	173	159	176	161	175	209	165	168.8	187	17.8
13-14	148	163	158	181	194	192	175	168.8	183.5	18
14-15	177	197	163	178	200	168	191	183	179.5	17.9
15-16	152	183	183	138	179	182	145	167	163.5	17.5
16-17	185	149	247	176	206	173	193	192.6	183	16.8
17-18	188	179	171	171	196	141	182	181	161.5	17.6
18-19	162	156	168	142	150	148	173	155.6	160.5	17.4
19-20	148	132	136	141	169	134	136	145.2	134.5	17.6
20-21	105	87	97	93	114	90	84	99.2	87	18
21-22	36	63	58	47	61	69	24	53	46.5	17.8
22-23	24	49	51	41	52	29	35	43.4	32	18.2
23-24	21	21	19	36	39	45	17	27.2	31	18.5
Totals	2491	2497	2568	2487	2652	2270	2073			
% of Total	14.6%	14.7%	15.1%	14.6%	15.6%	13.3%	12.2%			

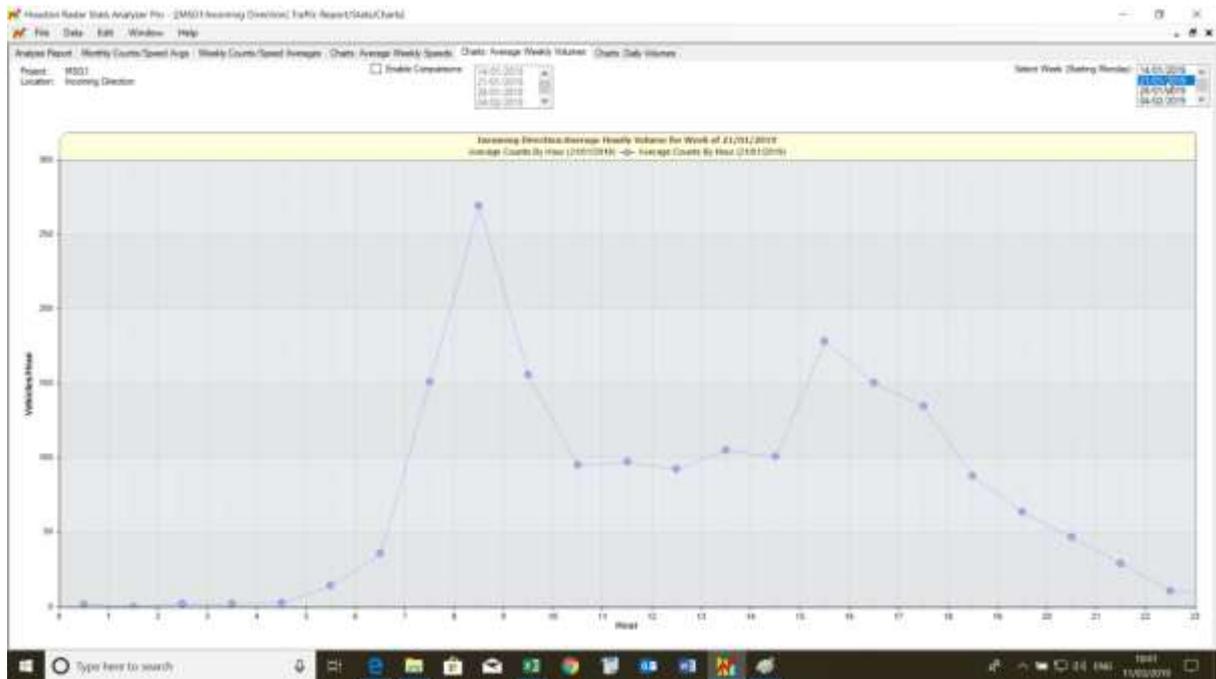
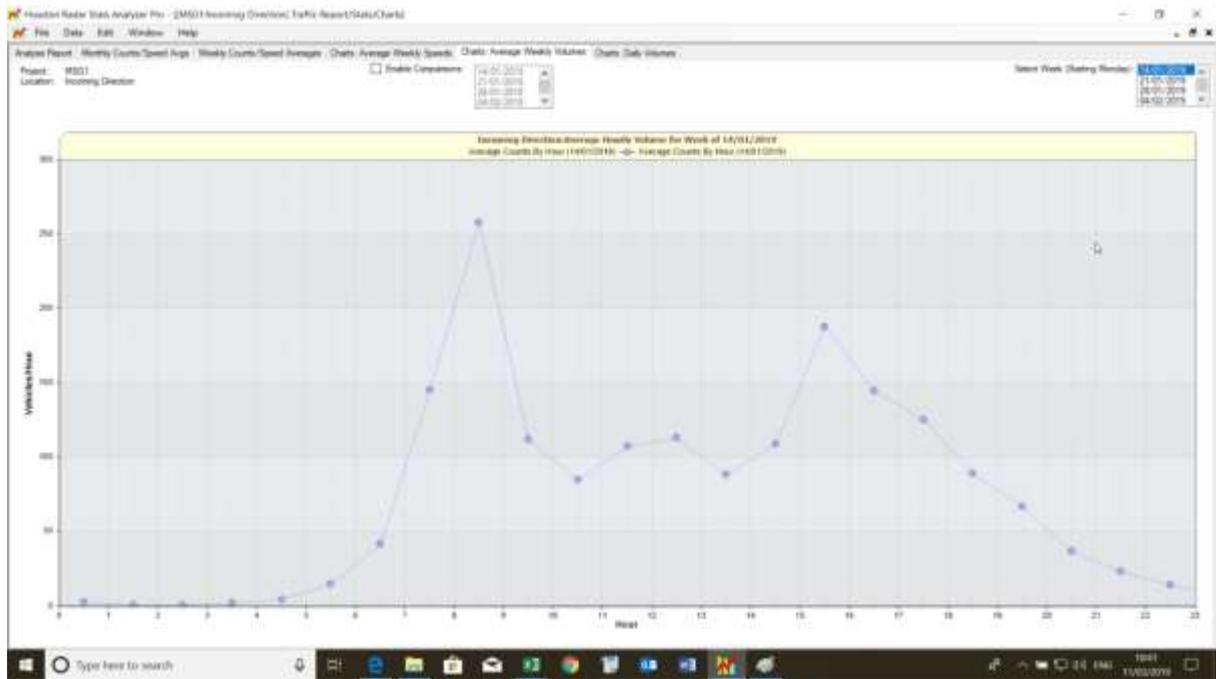
	Hour	Monday 28/01/2019	Tuesday 29/01/2019	Wednesday 30/01/2019	Thursday 31/01/2019	Friday 01/02/2019	Saturday 02/02/2019	Sunday 03/02/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
▶	0 - 1	4	2	3	2	4	4	*	3	4	22
	1 - 2	0	1	0	0	1	1	*	0.4	1	25
	2 - 3	0	1	1	0	0	2	*	0.4	2	10
	3 - 4	2	3	2	3	1	0	*	2.2	0	24
	4 - 5	9	5	6	6	6	3	*	6.4	3	22.5
	5 - 6	15	12	17	17	23	2	*	16.8	2	19.5
	6 - 7	39	45	46	43	39	*	*	42.4	*	21.7
	7 - 8	156	155	152	135	125	*	*	144.6	*	18.9
	8 - 9	314	257	254	258	173	*	*	251.2	*	17.6
	9 - 10	127	123	117	116	95	*	*	115.6	*	19.4
	10 - 11	98	67	76	88	65	*	*	78.8	*	19.7
	11 - 12	100	95	95	102	103	*	*	99	*	18.9
	12 - 13	88	76	96	114	94	*	*	93.6	*	19.4
	13 - 14	120	91	85	84	76	*	*	91.2	*	19.6
	14 - 15	96	82	72	101	85	*	*	87.2	*	19.6
	15 - 16	169	158	189	159	175	*	*	170	*	18.4
	16 - 17	172	147	146	128	112	*	*	141	*	18.9
	17 - 18	154	127	151	138	88	*	*	131.6	*	18.6
	18 - 19	87	101	73	86	65	*	*	82.4	*	20.7
	19 - 20	72	57	63	51	40	*	*	56.6	*	20.8
	20 - 21	42	35	41	34	42	*	*	38.8	*	20.4
	21 - 22	21	15	15	19	17	*	*	17.4	*	21.8
	22 - 23	9	15	8	17	10	*	*	11.8	*	21.2
	23 - 24	4	2	5	4	4	*	*	3.8	*	20.2
	Totals	1898	1672	1713	1705	1443	12	0			
	% of Total	22.5%	19.8%	20.3%	20.2%	17.1%	0.1%	0%			

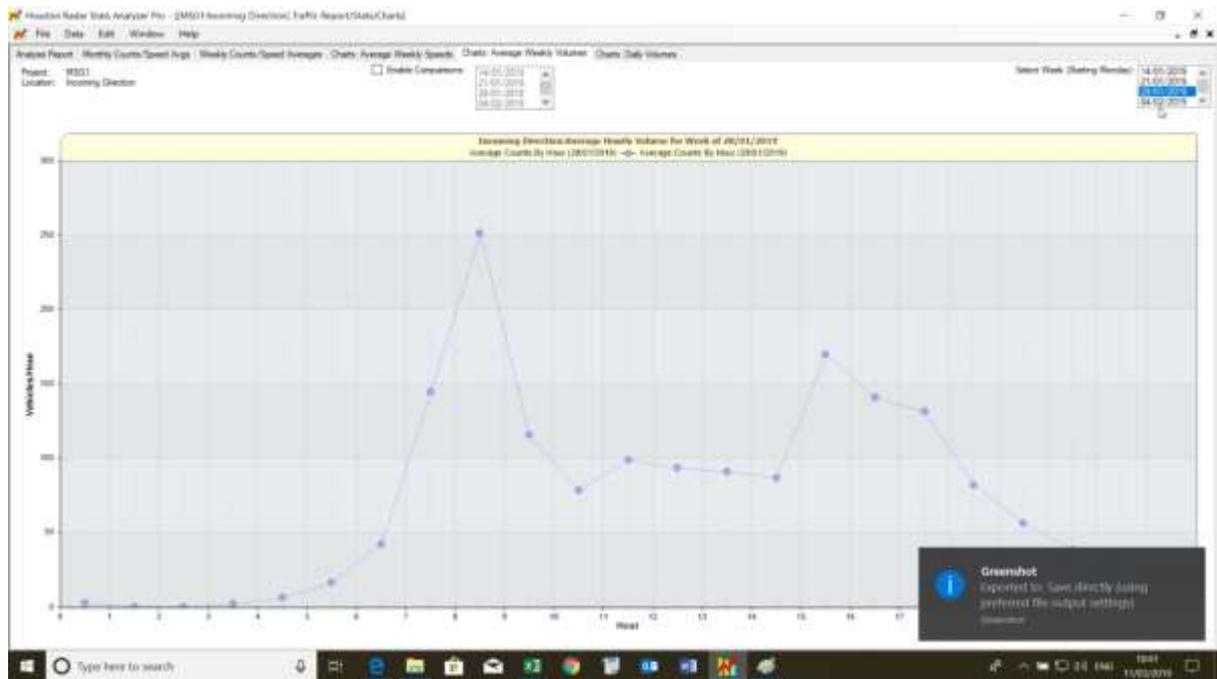
These totals were then summed.

Week 1 15/01/2019 to 20/01/2019.                    8902 vehicles  
Week 2 21/01/2019 to 27/01/2019                    11701 vehicles  
Week 3 28/01/2019 to 01/02/2019                    8443 vehicles

Total vehicle movements between 15<sup>th</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019    29046

# Summarised weekly by average over hourly periods





The Second Analysis after the junction of Neasham Rd and Middleton Lane.

Showing the cumulative totals for the two roads just after the junction.

Firstly counts were taken for each week :

Hour	Monday 11/02/2019	Tuesday 12/02/2019	Wednesday 13/02/2019	Thursday 14/02/2019	Friday 15/02/2019	Saturday 16/02/2019	Sunday 17/02/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	0	5	3	9	4	12	33	4.2	22.5	18.1
1-2	0	1	0	3	7	11	19	2.2	15	21.7
2-3	0	0	1	0	1	5	6	0.4	5.5	15
3-4	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0.8	1	20
4-5	0	2	2	3	4	0	7	2.2	3.5	18.3
5-6	0	10	5	11	5	4	2	6.2	3	20.2
6-7	0	29	21	23	24	3	6	19.4	4.5	20.5
7-8	0	71	89	103	80	22	16	68.6	19	19.3
8-9	0	277	247	289	256	83	30	213.8	56.5	17.7
9-10	0	276	298	281	281	141	96	227.2	98.5	16.6
10-11	0	183	179	204	206	212	171	154.4	191.5	17.9
11-12	0	157	199	155	165	185	176	135.2	180.5	17.8
12-13	0	163	146	188	191	208	184	172	196	17.4
13-14	25	154	183	210	173	191	178	149	184.5	18.1
14-15	160	168	164	173	174	167	176	167.8	171.5	17.7
15-16	184	199	194	182	192	167	171	190.2	169	18
16-17	172	219	202	218	224	182	186	207	184	16.7
17-18	179	167	171	219	175	145	158	182.2	151.5	17.4
18-19	144	151	175	173	152	164	140	167	152	17.7
19-20	172	145	172	135	127	162	102	150.2	132	17.7
20-21	95	96	83	95	102	98	82	94.2	90	18
21-22	33	43	60	63	81	69	43	56	56	18.7
22-23	26	27	29	39	41	34	33	32.4	33.5	18.9
23-24	14	14	15	33	47	35	18	24.8	26.5	19.6
Totals	1204	2557	2639	2812	2753	2301	1994			
% of Total	7.4%	15.7%	16.2%	17.3%	16.9%	14.2%	12.3%			

Hour	Monday 18/02/2019	Tuesday 19/02/2019	Wednesday 20/02/2019	Thursday 21/02/2019	Friday 22/02/2019	Saturday 23/02/2019	Sunday 24/02/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	9	3	5	11	8	21	30	7.2	25.5	22.3
1-2	2	1	3	1	2	11	6	1.8	8.5	18
2-3	0	1	2	0	1	2	7	0.8	4.5	20
3-4	3	3	1	0	0	2	2	1.4	2	25
4-5	2	3	2	3	1	4	2	2.2	3	23
5-6	10	12	11	11	8	6	3	10.4	4.5	21.8
6-7	35	38	21	28	29	7	5	30.2	6	19.8
7-8	90	83	76	85	62	28	12	79.2	20	19.4
8-9	203	222	216	237	164	78	47	208.4	62.5	18.2
9-10	211	192	210	227	204	114	77	208.8	95.5	18.1
10-11	226	226	211	206	225	207	169	218.8	188	18.1
11-12	181	175	183	173	213	210	194	185	202	17.8
12-13	173	159	176	161	175	209	165	168.8	187	17.8
13-14	148	163	158	181	194	192	175	168.8	183.5	18
14-15	177	197	163	178	200	168	191	183	179.5	17.9
15-16	152	183	183	138	179	182	145	167	163.5	17.5
16-17	185	149	247	176	206	173	193	192.6	183	16.8
17-18	188	179	171	171	196	141	182	181	161.5	17.6
18-19	162	156	168	142	150	148	173	155.6	160.5	17.4
19-20	148	132	136	141	169	134	135	145.2	134.5	17.6
20-21	105	87	97	93	114	90	84	99.2	87	18
21-22	36	63	58	47	61	69	24	53	46.5	17.8
22-23	24	49	51	41	52	29	35	43.4	32	18.2
23-24	21	21	19	36	39	45	17	27.2	31	18.5
Totals	2491	2497	2568	2487	2652	2270	2073			
% of Total	14.6%	14.7%	15.1%	14.6%	15.6%	13.3%	12.2%			

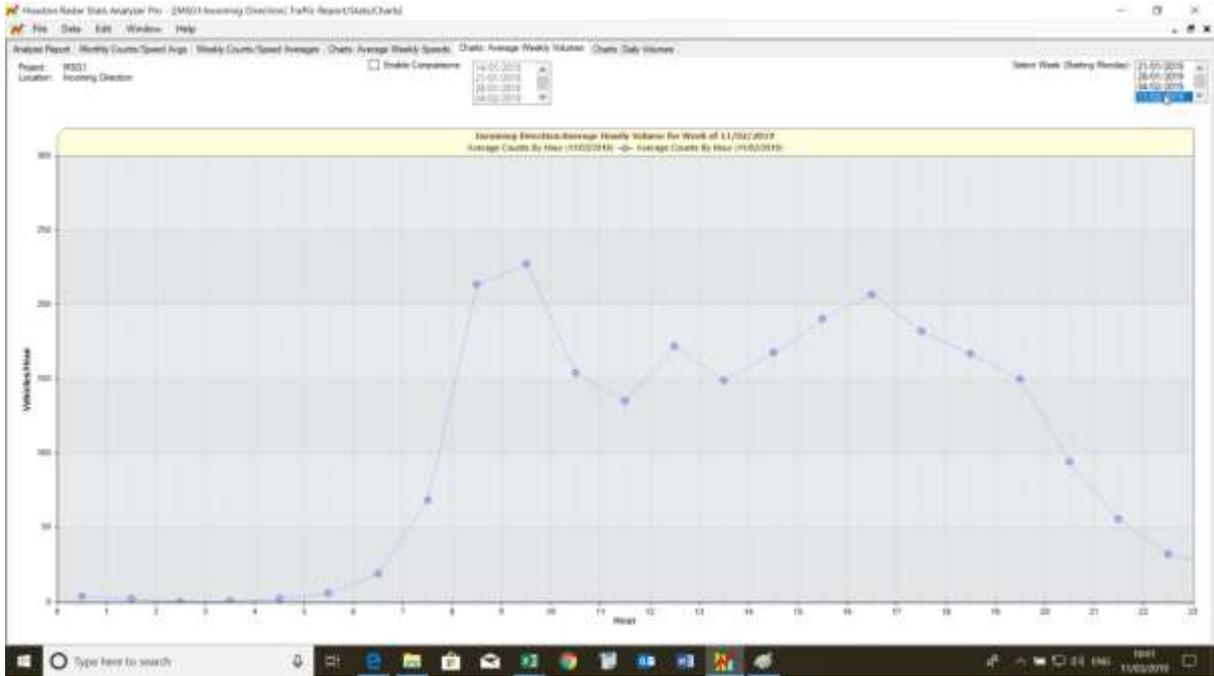
Hour	Monday 25/02/2019	Tuesday 26/02/2019	Wednesday 27/02/2019	Thursday 28/02/2019	Friday 01/03/2019	Saturday 02/03/2019	Sunday 03/03/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0 - 1	1	3	12	8	*	*	*	6	*	15.8
1 - 2	1	1	0	3	*	*	*	1.3	*	23.3
2 - 3	1	4	2	2	*	*	*	2.3	*	18.8
3 - 4	0	0	1	0	*	*	*	0.3	*	15
4 - 5	3	1	1	0	*	*	*	1.3	*	18.3
5 - 6	9	8	10	7	*	*	*	8.5	*	20.7
6 - 7	26	34	25	31	*	*	*	29	*	19.5
7 - 8	80	85	116	76	*	*	*	89.3	*	18.9
8 - 9	283	297	280	231	*	*	*	272.8	*	17.8
9 - 10	333	285	327	298	*	*	*	310.8	*	16.2
10 - 11	214	191	175	157	*	*	*	185.3	*	17.7
11 - 12	164	173	168	0	*	*	*	126.3	*	17.9
12 - 13	152	149	166	0	*	*	*	116.8	*	17.7
13 - 14	156	159	145	*	*	*	*	153.3	*	17.6
14 - 15	193	180	166	*	*	*	*	179.7	*	17.8
15 - 16	191	213	215	*	*	*	*	206.3	*	18.1
16 - 17	233	224	218	*	*	*	*	225	*	15.8
17 - 18	208	175	226	*	*	*	*	203	*	16.8
18 - 19	183	173	180	*	*	*	*	178.7	*	17.6
19 - 20	157	184	165	*	*	*	*	168.7	*	17.5
20 - 21	108	115	78	*	*	*	*	100.3	*	18.2
21 - 22	57	42	42	*	*	*	*	47	*	18.6
22 - 23	41	37	51	*	*	*	*	43	*	17.8
23 - 24	24	33	33	*	*	*	*	30	*	18.4
Totals	2818	2766	2806	813	0	0	0			
% of Total	30.6%	30.1%	30.5%	8.8%	0%	0%	0%			

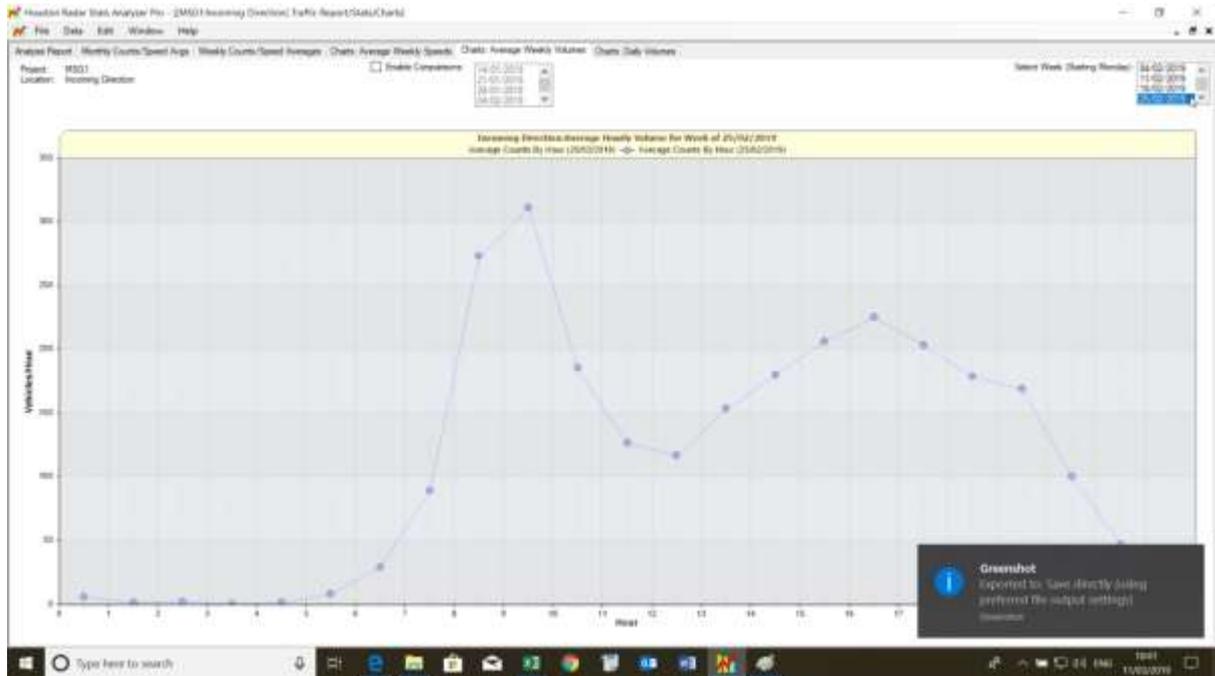
These totals were then summed.

Week 1 11/02/2019 to 17/02/2019.	16260 vehicles
Week 2 18/02/2019 to 24/02/2019	17038 vehicles
Week 3 25/02/2019 to 28/02/2019	9203 vehicles

Total vehicle movements between 11<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>st</sup> February 2019 42501

Summarised weekly by average over hourly periods





Conclusion from the survey.

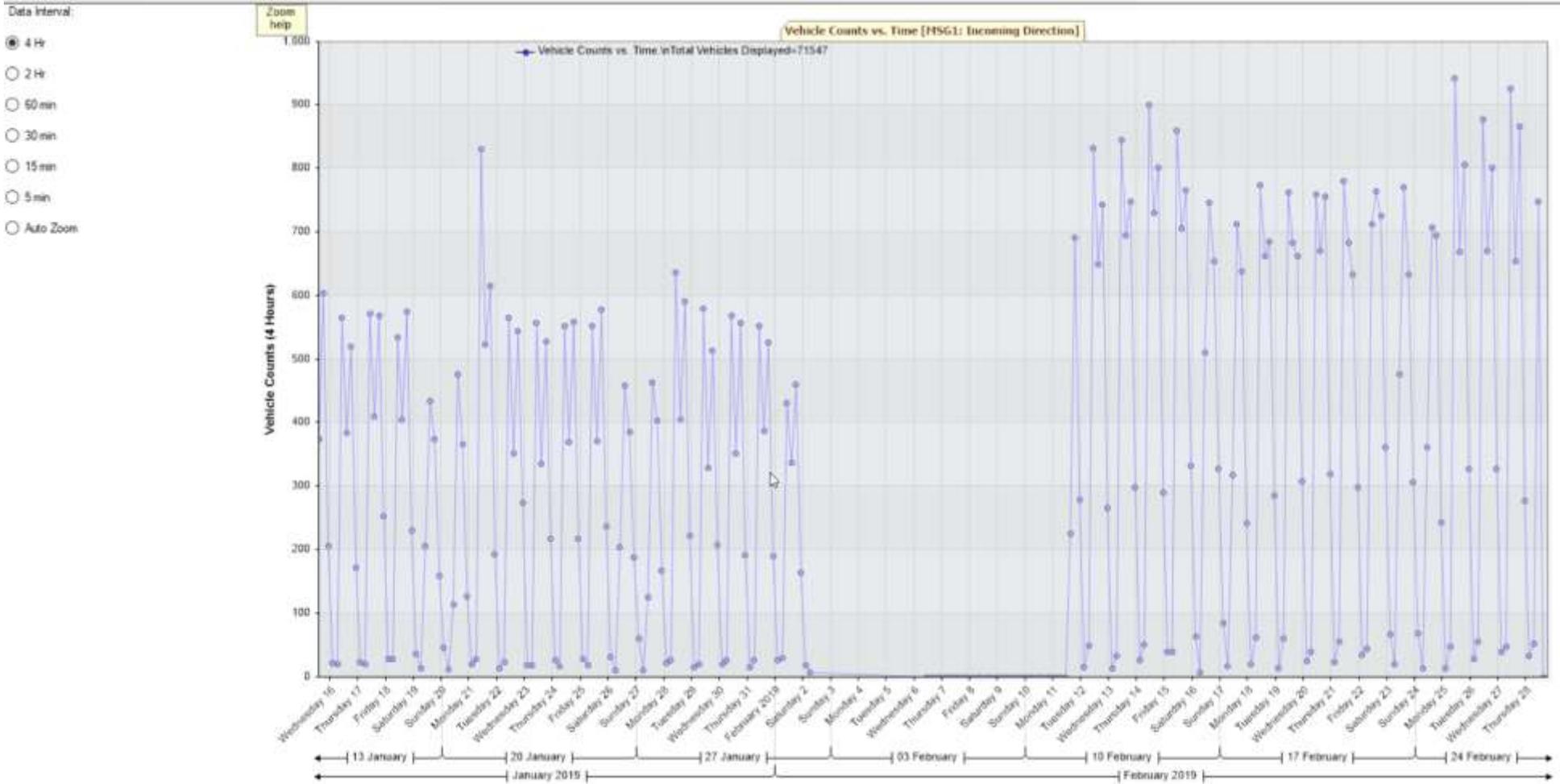
The number of vehicle movements in and out of the village centre from Middleton Lane and the adjoining Neasham Rd is extremely high.

The Parish Council are gravely concerned that any further housing developments off Neasham Rd or Middleton Lane will cause this traffic to increase considerably and the highway infrastructure of the village cannot cope with more traffic.

Please note that the tables and graphs were taken from the Houston Radar Stats Analyser Pro Software version 8.02.0014



The raw data is available should it be needed.





# Middleton St George Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

January 2020

## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
1	September 2019	Draft for technical review	PA	Paul Avery	Housing Research Consultant
2	October 2019	Draft for group review	KP	Kerry Parr	Associate Director
3	October 2019	Reviewed by group	JG	Jo-Anne Garrick	Planning Consultant for Group
4	October	Draft for Locality review	PA	Paul Avery	Housing Research Consultant
5	January 2020	Selective Update	KP	Kerry Parr	Associate Director

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**Disclaimer**

This document is intended to aid the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, and can be used to guide decision making and as evidence to support Plan policies, if the Qualifying Body (i.e. the neighbourhood planning group) so chooses. It is not a neighbourhood plan policy document. It is a 'snapshot' in time and may become superseded by more recent information. The Qualifying Body is not bound to accept its conclusions. If any party can demonstrate that any of the evidence presented herein is inaccurate or out of date, such evidence can be presented to the Qualifying Body at the consultation stage. Where evidence from elsewhere conflicts with this report, the Qualifying Body should decide what policy position to take in the Neighbourhood Plan and that judgement should be documented so that it can be defended at the Examination stage.

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**List of acronyms used in the text:**

AH	Affordable Housing (NPPF definition)
AMH	Affordable Market Housing
DBC	Darlington Borough Council
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
HNF	Housing Need Figure
Housing LIN	Housing Learning and Improvement Network
HRP	Household Reference Person
LHN	Local Housing Need
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LQAR	Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio
LTHPD	Long-Term Health Problem or Disability
MAR	Median Affordability Ratio
MH	Market Housing
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG)
MSGPC	Middleton St George Parish Council
NA	Neighbourhood (Plan) Area
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Order
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRS	Private Rented Sector
RQ	Research Question
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
VOA	Valuation Office Agency

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Quantity

1. Middleton St George's share of Darlington Borough's Local Housing Need (LHN is 8 dwellings per year, or 136 units over the Plan period 2019-2036, according to the strategy for the pattern and scale of development across the Borough outlined in the emerging Local Plan.
2. Were this strategy not taken into account (i.e. were the adopted Core Strategy the only available planning document for the Borough), Middleton St George's housing needs figure (HNF) would be 7 dwellings per year, or 119 over the Plan period.
3. These HNFs are both substantially lower than the 731 dwellings that are proposed to be allocated in the emerging Local Plan. This proposes that when the supply of available land and suitable sites is taken into account, Middleton St George could provide a greater share of housing growth in order to meet a share of the needs of the wider Borough.
4. When the emerging Local Plan is adopted, either in its current form or revised in response to the consultation period, the housing requirement figure (HRF) or allocations provided, will supersede the provisional figure provided here.

## 1.2 Tenure

5. Middleton St George is characterised by an unusually high proportion of home ownership, as opposed to private and social renting, when compared with Darlington and England as a whole. While this could be taken to indicate a housing market where home ownership is within reach of most people, a more detailed analysis of affordability reveals that this is not the case. The annual income required for a market sale home (in terms of mortgage availability, and not including the cost of the necessary deposit) is 77% higher than the average total household income locally. In the most recent ten-year period, the average lower quartile house price has appreciated by 19%, though these prices are broadly affordable to those on average incomes whilst remaining out of reach of those on the lowest earnings.
6. In this context it is unsurprising that the rate of private renting in Middleton St George increased by 250% in the decade between 2001 and 2011. Over that period, households unable to afford home ownership sought out the next most affordable widely available option, with more homes being put up for rent to satisfy growing demand, while households who would have at other times met their needs through social housing are increasingly obliged to rent privately while relying on housing benefit. Private renting therefore provides an important function in the housing market and, due to its still comparatively low availability, should continue to grow.
7. However, to ensure that households on lower than average incomes can afford to continue living in Middleton St George or form their own independent households, especially if reforms to welfare including housing benefit are implemented in the coming years, it will be important to diversify the tenure offering beyond these two most common open-market options.
8. The social rented sector in the NA is small. The share of social renting in the wider Borough is three times the size of the share in Middleton St George. Given that this is the only secure tenure within reach of single-earning households on lower quartile incomes (some may access private rented dwellings through housing benefit) the number of social or affordable rented homes should be increased wherever possible. Other forms of Affordable Housing that offer a route to home ownership, such as shared ownership, should also be promoted as a way to enable households on lower incomes to own their own homes should they wish to do so.
9. Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by Borough-wide planning policies that require it to be included at a set proportion of larger market housing developments. This policy expectation in Middleton St George, if the emerging Darlington Local Plan is adopted without changes to its draft policies, is that 20% of new housing on developments providing 11 dwellings or more will be affordable.
10. Of the 136 dwellings that our calculations indicate should be provided in Middleton St George over the Plan period, 27 Affordable Housing units should be delivered. This figure is lower than the 38 households that are projected to be in need of Affordable Housing to rent over the same period. If the majority of new housing is delivered through windfall development on small sites dispersed around the NA, many of these sites will not meet the requirement of providing 11 or more dwellings and so the number of Affordable Housing units will be lower still. Additionally, the 38 Affordable Housing units needed comprise only the affordable and social rented tenures, but not the affordable routes to home ownership that will also be provided within the Local Plan policy requirement. AECOM estimate suggest there is

additional need (or potential demand) for 128 affordable home ownership homes over the plan period (7.6 per annum), although the needs of these households are less urgent and they do not lack housing.

11. However, if the 6 major sites currently proposed to be allocated in Middleton St George in the emerging Darlington Local Plan, which total 731 dwellings, are delivered, 146 Affordable Housing units will be provided on the basis of the Local Plan policy requirement, which is in excess of local need for social/affordable rent, but would help to deliver additional affordable housing for sale and will help to meet the needs of locations throughout the Borough that are considered less sustainable for residential development. It may also be the case that the Affordable Housing will be delivered in part outside of the NA, subject to ongoing discussions with DBC.
12. If the community wishes to boost the supply of Affordable Housing there are other routes available to providing it. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all tried and tested ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing above the minima indicated by Local Plan policy.
13. It is recommended that approximately 79% be offered as social or affordable rent, with the remaining 21% delivered as affordable routes to home ownership, with an emphasis on shared ownership as opposed to starter homes (which are less affordable in this area).
14. Finally, it is worth noting that flats and terraced homes have not experienced the same levels of price appreciation as the detached and semi-detached homes that have been built in high volumes in recent years. It is assumed that their relative affordability holds in the rented sector as well.
15. The need to improve affordability in Middleton St George across all tenures aligns with our findings in relation to the type and size of homes – that new residential development should ensure a substantial proportion of smaller dwellings. Increasing the proportion of smaller homes and more affordable types (as above) should help to rebalance the housing stock in favour of options that are both suitable to the population profile as it evolves over time and that will combat growing affordability challenges.

### 1.3 Type and size

16. Middleton St George's stock of existing housing is notably different to that of Darlington and England as a whole: it contains double the Borough's proportion of detached homes and a correspondingly high proportion of larger homes, as well as a much lower proportion of smaller homes.
17. Large properties also underwent the greatest growth between 2001 and 2011 in the NA, significantly outstripping growth in the larger categories for the wider geographies. However, growth in smaller properties was also significantly greater at NA level than seen across Darlington and England as a whole because of a generally higher rate of new building and population growth.
18. The age profile of Middleton St George's population is relatively similar to that seen at Borough and national levels. However, divergence does occur in the 45-64 category, where the NA has a notably higher proportion of such residents, who are likely to reach retirement age during the Plan period. There are also lower proportions of people aged 24 and under in Middleton St George. The main demographic challenge would therefore appear to be a deficit in the younger population, however other metrics indicate that younger age groups grew between the Censuses and the number of families with children is high and growing.
19. With regard to housing, it will be important to supply dwellings appropriate to young and newly forming households as well as older households who may seek to rightsize. The needs and financial capabilities of both these groups do overlap to some extent, although the precise configuration and quality expectations that they have for smaller dwellings may vary.
20. Middleton St George's demographic profile in 2036 is expected to be dominated by households aged 65 and over and those aged 35 to 54. Three-bedroom homes are particularly popular among both these dominant age bands, with the 35 to 59 group also likely to occupy larger dwellings and the 65 and over group expressing a strong preference for 2 bedroom homes.
21. Given the fact that Middleton St George's current dwelling stock is made up of significantly larger dwellings compared with Darlington, and that changes in the NA's population suggest the need for smaller dwellings, it is logical that the recommended dwelling mix for new development over the Plan period should prioritise the provision of 2 and 3 bedroom homes suitable to downsizers and young families.

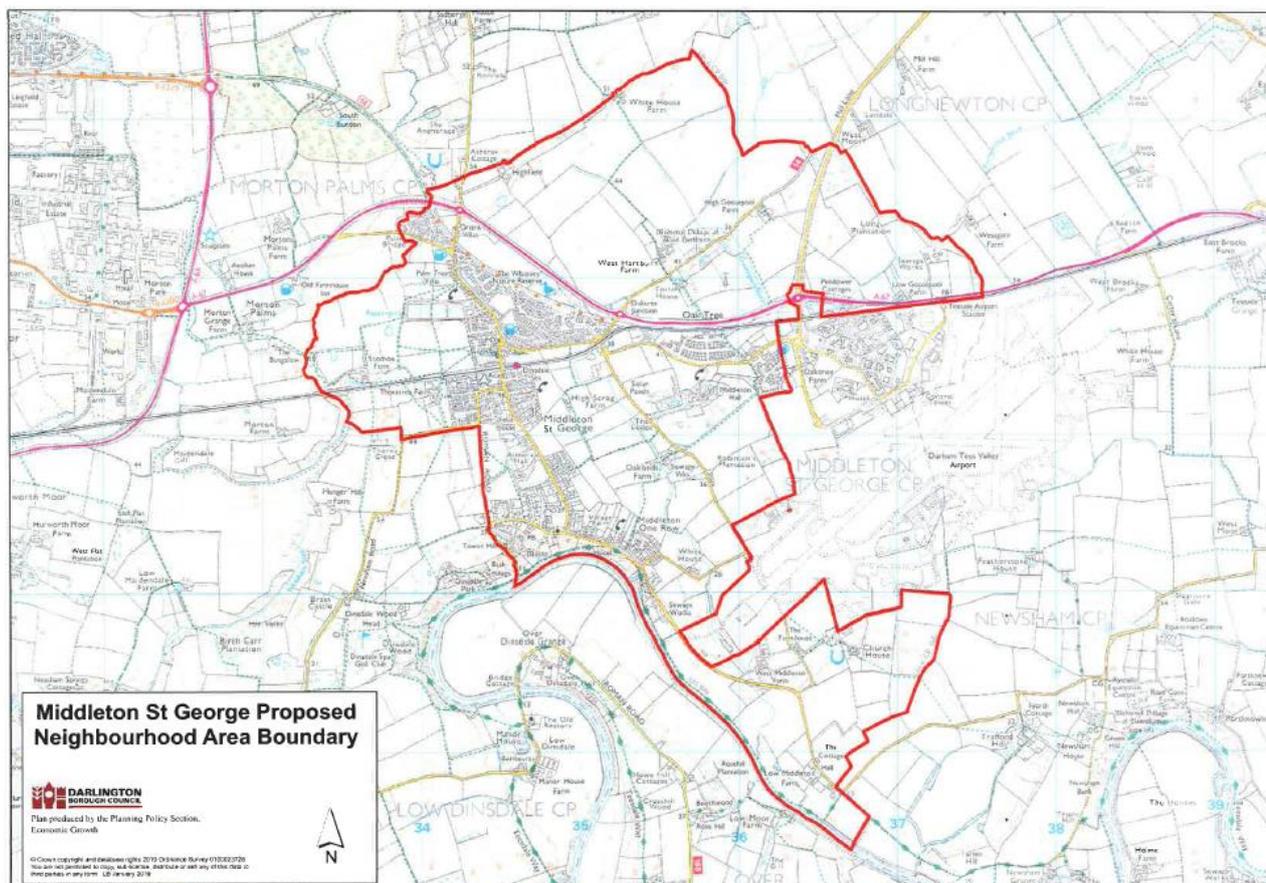
22. In the Tenure and Affordability chapter analysis, it was found that market housing for purchase is increasingly unaffordable and that those on the lowest incomes are unable to afford to live outside of the social rented sector. While Affordable Housing should be well balanced in terms of size to cater for all circumstances, the provision of smaller homes for sale and rent, as advised here, should make an important contribution to improving affordability more widely. If older households wishing to rightsize and younger ones seeking to form their own independent households are to be able to afford to live in Middleton St George, increasing the provision of small and mid-size homes and, in so doing, rebalancing the housing stock away from very large housing, will be key.
23. In terms of the types of dwellings required, the current predominance of detached dwellings, compared with Borough and national trends, suggests that there may be some unmet demand for the rarer and generally more affordable dwelling types, such as terraced homes and flats. The size recommendation for smaller homes would align with this. This might also include the delivery of bungalows in order to meet the needs of some older households and to reflect the fact that other smaller dwelling types, such as apartments, may not in practice be popular market propositions in a rural area like Middleton St George.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Local context

24. Middleton St George is a Neighbourhood Plan area located in the Borough of Darlington, County Durham. The Neighbourhood Area (NA) boundary comprises the settlements of Middleton St George and Middleton One Row, as well as the Virginia Estate and Oak Tree Estate. The NA was designated in 2019.
25. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan period starts in 2019 and extends to 2036, therefore comprising a planning period of 17 years.
26. The parish lies approximately five miles to the east of Darlington Town Centre and 10 miles to the west of Stockton and Middlesborough. The A67 road to Darlington runs from east to west just north of Middleton St George and the River Tees borders Middleton One Row to the south. The parish is served by Dinsdale railway station, which provides a service from Darlington to Saltburn via Middlesborough. Teesside International Airport, with flights to Aberdeen and Amsterdam, falls in part within the parish boundary.
27. Middleton St George was previously designated as a NA in 2014. However, parish boundaries were re-drawn in 2016 following a Community Governance Review by Darlington Borough Council. In 2019, the Parish Council therefore re-submitted an application for a NA designation. In both designations, the area owned by Durham Tees Valley Airport that falls within the parish boundary was excluded because it was considered that strategic matters such as those relating to land occupied by an airport cannot be addressed through neighbourhood plans.
28. For Census purposes, the Neighbourhood Plan area is made up, like the rest of England, of statistical units called Output Areas (OAs). The Plan area equates to the following OAs, which have been used throughout as a statistical proxy for the NA boundary and which can be interrogated for data from both the 2001 and the 2011 Censuses:
  - E01012346
  - E00062265, which had been used despite including a very small part of the airport at the far east.
  - E00062264, which falls partly within and partly outside of the NA boundary. The part outside of the NA boundary belongs to the Airport. The majority is clearly runway space, which will have no impact on population statistics, but a cluster of commercial buildings to the east of St George's Way and the south of the A67 also fall within its boundary. The entire OA has been used because the inclusion of a small amount of household data from this commercial area will have a lesser impact than the exclusion of the larger part of this OA that does fall within the NA boundary and which almost certainly contains rural housing.
  - E00062266
  - E00062267
  - E00062268
  - E00062269
  - E00062272
  - E00062261, which has not been used because only approximately one eighth of this OA falls within the NA – an almost entirely rural area to the east of the community centre.
29. At the time of the 2011 Census the Neighbourhood Plan area had a total of 4,337 residents.
30. A map of the Plan area appears overleaf in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2-1: Map of the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>1</sup>



Source: Proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area designation notice

31. The Parish Council are interested in exploring the need for Affordable Housing for sale and are therefore eligible for support under the affordable housing for sale element of the Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support programme. This aspect has been considered where relevant in the HNA.

## 2.2 Planning policy context

32. In line with the Basic Conditions<sup>2</sup> of neighbourhood planning, Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic local policies.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, there is a need for the relevant elements of the Local Plan to be reviewed as part of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).

33. In the case of Middleton St George, the relevant local planning context is as follows:

34. Darlington Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan that will cover the period 2016-2036. A draft of the emerging Plan went through a public consultation in Summer 2018 but before being taken to Cabinet for approval, the process was put on hold to allow further analysis to be undertaken and to take into account views expressed during the consultation. The pause in the delivery of the Local Plan, announced in July 2019, is still in effect at the time of writing. The version of the emerging Local Plan 2016-2036 used for the purpose of this study is the consultation draft published in June 2018.

35. Until the emerging Local Plan is formally adopted – either in its current state or a revised or replacement version – the

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://middleton-st-george.org.uk/proposed-middleton-st-george-neighbourhood-plan-area/>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning-2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum>

<sup>3</sup> However, this does not affect the potential for the evidence base underpinning the emerging local plan to inform or form part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan.

most recent statutory planning document, with which planning applications must fully comply until such time as it is replaced by the new Local Plan, is the Core Strategy covering the period 2011-2026. However, it is worth considering the content of the emerging Local Plan as it currently stands, and the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan should seek to have regard to it where possible.

- 36. There also exists an older Local Plan for Darlington Borough, adopted in 1997 with alterations approved in 2001. Many of its policies were saved under the provisions of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Some of these policies have been replaced by the Core Strategy, and others remain part of the planning framework for the Borough until they are replaced in the emerging Local Plan.
- 37. Particularly because the emerging Local Plan has been paused pending additional analysis and is potentially liable to change, it will be necessary for the purposes of this study to review all of the relevant housing policies in it and the adopted Core Strategy.
- 38. The adopted Local Plan from 1997 has also been reviewed to consider any policies that remain in force, having not been superseded in the Core Strategy but still impacting housing policy in Darlington Borough. No such policies requiring inclusion here have been identified.

### 2.2.1 Policies in the adopted Core Strategy<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2-2: Summary of Darlington Borough adopted policies having relevance to Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment**

Policy	Provisions
CS1 Darlington’s Sub-Regional Role and Locational Strategy	<p>New development activity is to be concentrated in sustainable locations within the main urban area of Darlington.</p> <p>However, development that supports the vitality and viability of the Borough’s villages will also be supported, particularly in Hurwoth/Hurworth Place, Middleton St George and Heighington.</p> <p>Outside of the main urban area and villages, development will be limited to that required to meet identified rural needs.</p>
CS10 New Housing Development	<p>Provision is made for 350 dwellings per annum between 2011-2021 and 400 dwellings per annum between 2021-2026. This comes to a total of 8,675 net additional dwellings over the Plan period.</p> <p>These allocations are made across a number of strategic locations – all in and around Darlington, and none in Middleton St George or other villages.</p>
CS11 Meeting Housing Needs	<p>New housing delivery is required to contribute to achieving overall balance within the housing stock that better meets local needs and aspirations.</p> <p>A target is set for at least 35 Affordable Housing units per annum between 2011-2016 and at least 50 per annum thereafter.</p> <p>All developments of 15 dwellings or more within the main Urban Area and 5 dwellings or more outside of it are required to provide or contribute towards the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 30% Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Housing for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Housing for older people</li> <li>• Detached family housing with four or more bedrooms</li> </ul> <p>The exact mix will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account up-to-date evidence</p>

Source: Darlington Borough Core Strategy 2011-2026

<sup>4</sup> Note that only those policies considered relevant to this Housing Needs Assessment have been reviewed, and that the policies reviewed may have been edited for relevance and/or clarity. As such, this summary of relevant policies should not be considered a full summary of the Local Plan in question.

## 2.2.2 Policies in the emerging Local Plan<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2-3: Summary of Darlington Borough emerging policies having relevance to Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Provisions</b>
SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy	<p>A hierarchy of settlements determines the distribution of development across the Borough. The hierarchy is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Darlington Urban Area;</li> <li>b. Service Villages: Heighington, Hurworth and Middleton St George;</li> <li>c. Rural Villages: all other villages with defined development limits.</li> </ol> <p>Only the Urban Area, extensions to it, and the Service Villages are considered suitable for housing development in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Middleton St George is classed as a Service Village because it provides a core set of essential services for local communities and is well-connected to higher service centres by public transport.</p> <p>As such, development opportunities in Middleton St George may be permitted where they meet local needs and do not alter the village's distinctive character.</p>
H1 Housing Requirement	<p>Darlington Borough's minimum housing requirement is 422 net additional dwellings per annum, equivalent to a total of 8,440 dwellings over the Plan period 2016-2036.</p> <p>A higher housing target that takes economic growth into account totals 492 net additional dwellings per annum, or 9,480 over the Plan period.</p> <p>The Local Plan allocates a sufficient quantity of sites to exceed both the minimum requirement and higher target.</p> <p>Of these sites, 10.4% of new dwellings are allocated in Service Villages including Middleton St George.</p>
H 2 Housing Allocations	<p>A total of 26 housing sites are allocated in Darlington Borough, totalling an indicative 7,965 dwellings over the Plan period and a further 5,075 beyond it. This is sufficient to meet the minimum and the target when extant permissions and completions since 2016 are included.</p> <p>Of these, 8 sites totalling 826 dwellings are allocated to Service Villages. Of those, 6 sites totalling 731 dwellings are allocated to Middleton St George.</p>
H 4 Housing Mix	<p>Proposals for development will be expected to provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures appropriate to local needs identified by the SHMA or other evidence.</p>
H 5 Affordable Housing	<p>Residential development schemes of 11 or more dwellings are expected to provide Affordable Housing on site, or to pay a commutable sum where certain conditions apply.</p> <p>The percentage of new dwellings on such sites that are required to be affordable differs by ward.</p> <p>Development in Middleton St George is required to provide 20% Affordable Housing.</p>

Source: Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 Draft Consultation Version 2018

<sup>5</sup> Note that only those policies considered relevant to this Housing Needs Assessment have been reviewed, and that the policies reviewed may have been edited for relevance and/or clarity. As such, this summary of relevant policies should not be considered a full summary of the Local Plan in question.

## 3. Approach

### 3.1 Research Questions

39. Research Questions, abbreviated to 'RQs', are formulated at the start of the project through discussion with the Parish Council. They serve to direct our research and provide the structure for the HNA.
40. Below we set out the RQs relevant to this study, as discussed and agreed with Middleton St George Parish Council.

#### 3.1.1 Quantity

41. Middleton St George does not currently benefit from a specific housing requirement figure (HRF) provided by Darlington through the Local Plan process, although a number of housing allocations are proposed to be made in the emerging Darlington Local Plan, which is currently on hold pending a detailed review of consultation responses.
42. In line with its new obligations under NPPF 2019 (paragraphs 65 and 66) Darlington will be providing Middleton St George with an HRF and final set of allocations as part of the next iteration of the emerging Local Plan. However, the Parish Council have asked AECOM to calculate the potential housing needs figure (HNF) in line with national policy and best practice to provide an interim until the Local Plan HNF is available.
43. As such, a quantity figure needs to be caveated as it has the potential to differ from any HRF provided by Darlington after the completion of this report. In line with national policy, when the emerging Plan is adopted the Darlington HRF will supersede that calculated by AECOM (if it comes to a different figure).
44. With all this in mind, an appropriate RQ for this study is as follows:

***RQ 1: What quantity of housing in the Neighbourhood Area should be planned for over the Plan period?***

#### 3.1.2 Tenure and Affordability

45. The Parish Council would like to understand the needs of the community for housing of varying tenures, as well as the relative affordability of the tenures that should be provided to meet local need now and in future.
46. This evidence will allow Middleton St George to establish the right conditions for new development to come forward that is affordable, both in the broader sense of market housing attainable for first-time buyers and others, and as Affordable Housing for those who may be currently unable to access market options.
47. However, it should be noted that a large proportion of the housing allocations proposed in the emerging Local Plan for Middleton St George have already had outline or full planning permission granted, and there is therefore potentially limited scope to influence the tenure profile of those existing permissions.

***RQ 2: What Affordable Housing (subsidised rent and subsidised home ownership tenures) should be planned for in the housing mix over the Neighbourhood Plan period?***

#### 3.1.3 Type and Size

48. The Parish Council is seeking to determine what size and type of housing would be best suited to the local community, particularly given the ageing of the population and perception that a high proportion of executive housing has recently been delivered.
49. The aim of this research question is to provide neighbourhood planners with evidence on the types and sizes needed by the local community. This will ensure future development reflects what residents need.

***RQ 3: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?***

## 3.2 Relevant Data

### 3.2.1 Local authority evidence base

50. It is reasonable and appropriate for neighbourhood planners to refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as a starting point. As Middleton St George Neighbourhood Area is located within Darlington's planning area the Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015) is relevant.
51. Part 1 of the 2015 SHMA was replaced by a 2017 Update, however this update concerns only the quantity of homes required across the Borough over the new Plan period of 2016-2036 (the 2015 SHMA used a Plan period of 2011-2036). Therefore the majority of evidence pertaining to the characteristics of housing need (such as type, size and tenure) referenced in this HNA, will be drawn from Parts 1 and 2 of the 2015 SHMA.
52. For the purpose of this HNA, data from Darlington's own evidence base to support their housing policies has been considered applicable and relevant unless it conflicts with more locally specific and/or more recently-produced evidence. The housing market evidence draws upon a range of data including population and demographic projections, housing market transactions, and employment scenarios. As such, it contains a range of relevant information when determining housing need within the Neighbourhood Plan area and has been referenced as appropriate.

### 3.2.2 Other relevant data

53. In addition to the Darlington evidence base, AECOM has assessed other evidence to ensure this study is robust for the purposes of developing policy at the NP level and is locally specific. This includes data from both Census 2001 and 2011, as well as from a wide range of other data sources, including:
  - Land Registry data on prices paid for housing within the local market;
  - Population and household projections produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS); and
  - Information on current property asking prices, for housing for sale or rent, from [home.co.uk](http://home.co.uk).

## 4. RQ 1: Quantity

### ***RQ 1: What quantity of housing in the Neighbourhood Area should be planned for over the Plan period?***

#### 4.1 Introduction

54. The NPPF (paragraph 65) states that strategic policy-making authorities “should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the Plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations”.
55. NPPF paragraph 66 states that “Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area<sup>6</sup> the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body”. This ‘indicative’ figure should (amongst other things) “take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the planning authority.”<sup>7</sup>
56. Given that no indicative housing requirement figure has been provided to Middleton St George at the time of writing there is the potential to calculate an objectively assessed Housing Need Figure (HNF) for the Neighbourhood Plan area. That said, Middleton St George has been proposed to be allocated a number of sites for housing in the emerging Darlington Local Plan which could be understood to constitute the NA’s housing target. For the purpose of this exercise, and due to the fact that the emerging Local Plan is at an uncertain stage of development, these allocations have not been taken into account; rather the evidence of need has been examined afresh.
57. In calculating this HNF, it should be noted that paragraphs 65 and 66 place specific obligations on strategic or local planning authorities and no other parties (i.e. AECOM is not obliged to follow directly paragraphs 65 and 66). However, AECOM’s calculation will be of most use as a starting point, both to the Parish Council and to the LPA, if it mirrors the NPPF’s suggested approach as closely as possible. This is the approach that has been taken.
58. The Planning Practice Guidance<sup>8</sup> states “Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area. Assessing housing need is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes need to be planned for. It should be undertaken separately from assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure and preparing policies to address this such as site allocations”.
59. A housing need figure is a policy-off figure. This means that, while it takes account of the factors set out paragraph 66 of the NPPF and dwelling completions over the course of the Plan period, it is an expression of total housing demand unconstrained by the limits of the land available to build on. It is also unconstrained by the impact of policies that either facilitate or obstruct development. A policy-off figure can then be reviewed in light of further evidence including environmental constraints, land availability, relevant Local and Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies, to formulate a policy-on Neighbourhood Plan housing requirement figure.
60. AECOM has estimated the number of new dwellings that should be sought in the Neighbourhood Plan area over the Plan period (the Housing Need Figure or HNF) using a four-step approach reflecting the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advice. This is set out in the box overleaf.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, this could be where a neighbourhood area has been designated at a late stage in the strategic policy-making process, or after strategic policies have been adopted; or in instances where strategic policies for housing are out of date.

<sup>7</sup> NPPF, paragraph 66, page 18- available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2a-001-20190220 at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

**Step 1: “the population of the neighbourhood area”**

The HNF for the Neighbourhood Plan area should take as its starting point the housing target for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in which it sits. The baseline for our calculation for NA is therefore a share of the current LPA Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) figure that reflects the share of the LPA population living in the Plan area.

NPPF requires Local Authorities, and anyone calculating LHN in their place, to use the standard method.<sup>9</sup> This calculation takes the most recent MHCLG-approved household population projection for the LPA, applies to it an uplift based on the most recent ONS affordability ratio for that area, and then applies a cap to that number if certain conditions are met.

**Step 2: “most recently available planning strategy of the planning authority”**

We then follow the guidance presented in the NPPF which states that the initial HNF for neighbourhood plans should reflect “the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations,”<sup>10</sup> and “the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.”<sup>11</sup>

This means introducing Local Authority spatial policy, housing targets, and assessments of housing need at different scales to estimate a more locally appropriate proportion of the LPA housing target that should be provided in NA. This will often result in a slightly different figure to that produced in Step 1.

**Step 3: Dwelling completions**

Next, any dwellings that have already been completed over the Plan period to the present date should be deducted from the total in order to provide a HNF for the remainder of the Plan period and an annual HNF that reflects past under- or over-delivery. While it is appropriate to consider existing commitments (i.e. dwellings with planning permission, but not yet completed) at this point, they should not be deducted from the total until they are completed.

**Step 4: the Local Authority**

The NPPF makes it clear that the Local Authority should provide housing numbers to designated neighbourhood planning areas within their area where requested to do so. To this extent, AECOM is performing a similar role to that required of the Local Authority in providing a HNF to the Neighbourhood Plan area. With this in mind, it is important the group share the HNF and underlying methodology once they have received the final version of this document with the LPA to seek confirmation it is aligned with their current planning strategy, in particular those circumstances which may justify an uplift to the HNF set out in PPG.<sup>12</sup>

61. Employing this methodology, the Housing Needs Figure for the Neighbourhood Area may be calculated as follows:

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

<sup>10</sup> NPPF, paragraph 65, page 18.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

## 4.2 Standard method (Step 1)

62. Firstly, Local Housing Need (LHN) is calculated for the LPA using the standard method outlined in Planning Policy Guidance, before taking the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area, and calculating the proportion of the total population of the LPA area that it represents. This percentage will then be used to determine the share of the LPA target that should be apportioned to the Neighbourhood Plan area.
63. The Darlington LHN figure, using the standard method, is calculated as follows<sup>13</sup>:
64. **Stage one** is to set the baseline, by calculating the projected average annual household growth in Darlington over a 10-year period, beginning with the current year, using the most recent ONS household projections:
- According to Darlington's 2014-based household projection, total household growth will be 1,585 households (thus occupying 1,585 dwellings) between 2019 and 2029. This equates to an annual average of 159 households.
65. **Stage two** is to adjust this annual average using the most recent ONS median workplace-based affordability ratios,<sup>14</sup> which provide the ratio of house prices to earnings in various geographies. For each 1% increase in the ratio above 4, projected household growth should be increased by a quarter of a percent:
- Darlington's 2018 median affordability ratio is 5.32. Using the formula outlined in PPG to calculate the adjustment factor<sup>15</sup> results in a minimum annual figure of 171 dwellings (rounded).
66. **Stage three** is to apply a cap which limits the magnitude of increase an LPA can face. How this is calculated depends on the current status of relevant strategic policies for housing. There are two options depending on whether those policies were adopted within the last five years or are older:
- Option 1: where the relevant strategic policies were adopted within the last five years (at the point of making the calculation), the LHN is capped at 40% above the average annual housing requirement figure set out in the existing policies. This also applies where the relevant strategic policies have been reviewed by the authority within the 5-year period and have been found not to require updating.
  - Option 2: where the relevant strategic policies for housing were adopted more than 5 years ago (at the point of making the calculation), the LHN is capped at 40% above whichever is the higher of:
    - a) the annual average projected household growth for the area over the 10-year period identified in Stage One above; or
    - b) the average annual housing requirement figure set out in the most recently adopted strategic policies (if a figure exists).
  - The relevant strategic policy in this case is Policy CS10 New Housing Development in the Core Strategy (adopted 2011). As this document was not adopted within the last five years, the second option above is applied.
  - For a) the average annual projected household growth is 159, as identified above
  - For b) the average annual housing requirement figure in Policy CS10 is for 367 new homes (an average of 350 per year from 2011-2021 and 400 per year from 2021-2026
  - Thus, the cap is applied to b) and not a). A cap of 40% above 367 is 514 dwellings (rounded).
  - The cap of 514 is greater than the figure of Stage two figure of 171 dwellings, and therefore does not limit the adjustment for affordability. The minimum LHN for Darlington is therefore 171 net additional dwellings per year.
67. Having derived Darlington's LHN, we now calculate Middleton St George's share of that target, by determining what proportion of Darlington's population currently reside in Middleton St George and applying that percentage to

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<sup>13</sup> Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

<sup>14</sup> Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

Darlington's LHN.

68. At the time of the last Census, there were 4,337 people living in the Middleton St George NA, or 4.1% of the 105,564 people in Darlington. Therefore, applying this percentage to Darlington's LHN of 171 gives an indicative HNF for Middleton St George of 7 dwellings (rounded) per annum, or 119 dwellings over the Neighbourhood Plan period 2019-2036.

### 4.3 Latest available LPA planning strategy (Step 2)

69. However, as stated in NPPF guidance, it is important to acknowledge the relevant policies in the most recently available development plan document for the LPA. The policies reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. This requires producing a HNF for the Neighbourhood Plan area that takes into account the Local Authority's spatial strategy, and therefore may differ slightly from the initial HNF calculated above.
70. In Darlington, this document is the emerging Local Plan. However, given the fact that this document has not been adopted and may be amended as a consequence of the recent consultation period, AECOM has also produced an alternative figure that reflects the LPA planning strategy of the adopted Core Strategy.

#### Emerging Local Plan

71. The overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development is outlined in Policy SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy, which classifies Middleton St George as one of three Service Villages. The Service Villages are intended to be maintained as villages, with a level of development that will meet local needs and facilitate economic diversification. They occupy the middle tier of the Settlement Hierarchy, beneath Darlington Town, which is the primary location for new residential development, and above the Rural Villages, which are generally considered unsuitable for new housing and will be protected from development other than the sustainable use of existing buildings and infill sites.
72. Table 6.2 in the body of the Local Plan outlines the intended spatial distribution of housing according to the Settlement Hierarchy. It states that the Darlington urban area should meet 8.4% of the Borough's housing need, urban extensions around Darlington Town 81.2% of need, and the Service Villages to meet 10.4% of housing need.
73. On this clearly defined basis, approximately 18 dwellings per year (10.4% of Darlington's LHN of 171, rounded) should be provided within the Service Villages.
74. Policy H2 proceeds to allocate a number of housing sites to various locations in accordance with the proportions outlined in Table 6.2 (i.e. 10.4% of allocations are in the Service Villages). Of the 826 housing units allocated to the Service Villages, 88.5% (731) are allocated to Middleton St George. These allocations take into account the availability of land and suitable sites and therefore represent a supply-driven expression of Middleton St George's housing requirement rather than demand-led expression of housing need. In calculating a HNF for Middleton St George we are providing an alternative to this figure in the event that the Local Plan changes, and must therefore disregard these allocations. In order to produce a demand-led HNF we therefore next determine Middleton St George's share of the population of the three Service Villages, and estimate the need for housing on that basis.
75. The population of the three Service Village is as follows:
- Heighington Parish: 2,395
  - Hurworth Parish (and NA): 3,264
  - Middleton St George NA: 4,337
  - Total: 9,996
76. Middleton St George's proportion of the Service Village population is therefore 43.4%. On the basis that its share of the population is the best proxy for determining the NA's share of Service Village housing need, Middleton St George should deliver 8 dwellings per year (43.4% of 18). This equates to 136 housing units over the Plan period.
77. This is 1 dwelling per year higher than the result of Step 1 above, and it is appropriate to take forward this slightly higher figure because it complies with the PPG requirement that the local authority's strategy for the scale and pattern of development is taken into consideration.
78. The fact that Middleton St George's housing need is higher when Darlington's wider planning strategy is referred to (Step 2) than when it is calculated purely on the basis of the NA's share of the Borough's population (Step 1) reflects the specific opportunities and constraints that hold across Darlington. In particular, it has been determined that rural

settlements lack the services required to support sustainable residential development, so the larger settlements need to take a slightly larger share of housing growth.

79. As required in PPG, this is the latest available planning document, and therefore should be taken forward for calculating Middleton St George's HNF. However, in the case that the emerging Local Plan is held back for a longer period or significantly changed, it is useful to repeat the same exercise with regard to the adopted Core Strategy.

#### **Adopted Core Strategy**

80. The overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development is set out in Policy CS1: Darlington's Sub-Regional Role and Locational Strategy. It states that development in strategic locations within the main urban area of Darlington Town will be expected to meet most of the overall development needs of Darlington Borough. However, development that supports the vitality and viability of the Borough's villages will be supported – particularly in the same three larger service villages in the emerging Local Plan: Heighington, Hurworth and Middleton St George.
81. Unlike the emerging Local Plan, the adopted Core Strategy gives no further detail than this in terms of the proportion of development that should be allocated in those villages. From the wording of the policy as well as the allocations set out in Policy CS 10: New Housing Development, it can be assumed that in fact 100% of new residential development should be met within the main urban area of Darlington Town. While housing may come forward and be granted permission in Middleton St George, it does not form an explicit part of the spatial strategy.
82. In this case there are two options. The first is to have full regard to this strategy and therefore reduce Middleton St George's HNF to zero. The second is to disregard this element of the strategy because it reduces the HNF to zero and proceed instead on the basis of population figures to arrive at the HNF of 7 dwellings per year as calculated in Step 1 above.
83. Given that Middleton St George is an area of 4,337 people in a Borough that is projected to experience population growth, and is considered one of the next most sustainable locations for development after Darlington Town in both the adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan, it is not considered reasonable or realistic to reduce its HNF to zero. Therefore the second option, to proceed on the basis of its proportion of the population of the Borough, is proposed. On this basis Middleton St George's HNF would be (at least) 7 dwellings per year or 119 over the Plan period.

### **4.4 Past dwelling completions (Step 3)**

84. The next step is to subtract any net completions of new dwellings that have occurred since the beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan period. Because the Plan period begins in the year of writing (2019), there are no completions to be deducted. Darlington have provided a completions figure of 92 for the period 2018-19 (April to April), which was corrects as of August 2019, but does not include completions so far within 2019.
85. There are 654 current and valid dwelling commitments (i.e. planning permissions that are yet to be implemented) in Middleton St George, many of which are also included within the allocations proposed in the emerging Darlington Local Plan. However, AECOM recommends that commitments should not yet be discounted from the overall quantity figure; it is only once they are completed that this can take place. If all of these commitments are implemented, which is not guaranteed particularly in the context of the Local Plan being put on hold, there will be no need for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify further sites to meet this target. The Neighbourhood Plan could, however, identify further sites to ensure that particular needs within the overall need for housing are met (i.e. for Affordable Housing or specialist accommodation for the elderly).

### **4.5 Final Housing Need Figure**

86. Based on the evidence above, this HNA recommends a minimum HNF of 136 dwellings, which equates to 8 dwellings per year between 2019 and 2036. If the emerging Local Plan is substantially altered or remains at an uncertain stage of development, the HNF based upon the adopted Core Strategy would be a minimum of 119 or 7 dwellings per year between 2019 and 2036.
87. The housing figure for Darlington is derived from the Government's Standard Methodology and is likely to change as the Government publish new affordability data each year and new household projections approximately every two years. This could impact on the number of homes required in Darlington and any indicative housing requirement figure provided by Darlington for neighbourhood areas.

88. At the time the final Neighbourhood Plan housing requirement figure is provided by Darlington, it can be considered to supersede the provisional calculation within this study. Consequently, there is a need for the Parish Council to continue to engage with the LPA to confirm the final housing figure for the Neighbourhood Plan.
89. Because Darlington's LHN is lower than previous targets, such as that set out in the adopted Core Strategy, there is a risk that the actual requirement for Darlington when finalized could be higher. This could have a knock-on effect on the HNF for Middleton St George. As a result it might be worth the neighbourhood planners considering a range of housing targets as well as how this might affect different options for growth.

## 5. RQ 2: Tenure and Affordability

**RQ 2: What Affordable Housing (subsidised rent and subsidised home ownership tenures) should be planned for in the housing mix over the Neighbourhood Plan period?**

### 5.1 Introduction

90. Tenure refers to the legal arrangements in place that enable a household to live in their home; it determines householder rights and influences the level of payments to be made in return for these rights. Broadly speaking, tenure falls into two categories, Affordable Housing and market housing, depending on whether the household benefits from a subsidy of some sort to enable them to live in their home.
91. This section will examine the tenure of dwellings in the current stock and recent supply. Then, looking at affordability, we will make an assessment on whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs. We will also investigate whether there are misalignments between the supply of different tenures of housing and local need. Such misalignments can justify policies that guide new developments to prioritise certain tenures, to bring supply and demand into better alignment.<sup>16</sup>

### 5.2 Definitions

92. It is necessary at this stage of the study to make clear the distinction between Affordable Housing as planning terminology and the colloquial meaning of the phrase. In the course of this study, we refer to Affordable Housing, abbreviated to 'AH'. AH comprises those forms of housing tenure that fall within the definition of Affordable Housing set out in the current NPPF: social rent, affordable rent, affordable private rent (brought forward by build to rent schemes), and forms of AH designed to offer affordable routes to home ownership.<sup>17</sup>
93. The definition of Affordable Housing set out in the NPPF makes clear the Government's commitment to home ownership, but recognises the important role of social, affordable, and private rent tenures for those not currently seeking home ownership.
94. The revisions seek to broaden the definition of AH (which had previously referred only to social and intermediate housing) to include a range of low-cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home, including starter homes.
95. In paragraph 64 of the NPPF, the Government introduces a recommendation that "*where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership*". In line with PPG,<sup>18</sup> the assumption should be that a 'major housing development' can be defined as a site of 10 dwellings or more, and that affordable home ownership includes starter homes, shared ownership homes, and homes available for discount market sale.

### 5.3 Current tenure profile

96. In order to set a baseline for our examination of tenure, it is necessary to present a picture of the Neighbourhood Plan area based on the most recent reliable data. Table 5-1 below presents Census data from 2011; this table shows the distribution of how households occupy their homes within Middleton St George, compared to the rest of Darlington and England.
97. As at district and national level, the majority of homes are owned in Middleton St George. However, the rate of ownership in the NA is much higher than both higher level geographies. Conversely, private rent makes up a slightly lower proportion of the tenure mix in the NA, and social rent is substantially lower. This lack of social and private rented stock (which can provide affordable housing if accessible to those on housing benefit) may be a major contributor to affordability challenges faced by local people.

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<sup>16</sup> PPG Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 2a-021-20160401, available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

<sup>17</sup> NPPF 2019.

<sup>18</sup> PPG 031 Reference ID: 23b-031-20161116, available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>

**Table 5-1: Tenure (households) in Middleton St George, 2011**

Tenure	Middleton St George	Darlington	England
Owned; total	81.0%	64.9%	63.3%
Shared ownership	0.5%	0.4%	0.8%
Social rented; total	5.3%	15.5%	17.7%
Private rented; total	12.4%	18.2%	16.8%

Sources: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

98. In Table 5-2, we note the changes in the way households occupied their homes during the intercensal period. The greatest change has been in the private rental category, which has undergone 250% growth against the still substantial 142.4% growth seen across Darlington (although this only represents an increase of 145 on top of the 62 units in 2001). Both these figures are far larger than the 82.4% seen across England as a whole. Shared ownership has also undergone drastic growth in the NA, at 166.7%. There has been greater government backing for this tenure and it is more affordable but this percentage growth is primarily explained by a low starting figure of just 3 properties at the time of the 2001 Census.

**Table 5-2: Rates of tenure change in Middleton St George, 2001-2011**

Tenure	Middleton St George	Darlington	England
Owned; total	16.3%	0.3%	-0.6%
Shared ownership	166.7%	21.9%	30.0%
Social rented; total	-22.5%	-5.6%	-0.9%
Private rented; total	250.0%	142.4%	82.4%

Sources: Censuses 2001 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

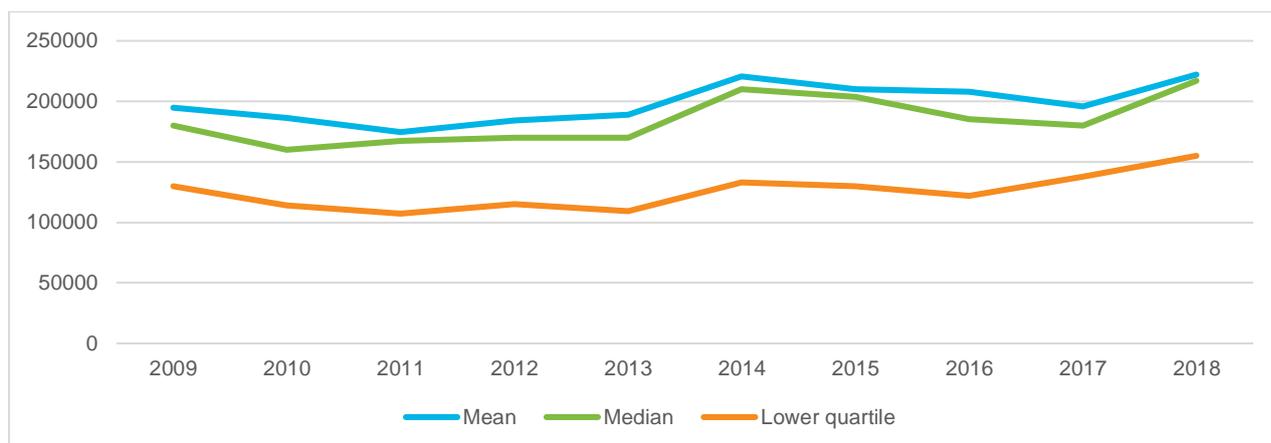
## 5.4 Affordability

99. Having reviewed the tenure of the existing housing stock in Middleton St George, the next step is to assess future provision over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
100. In order to understand whether the tenure profile of the current stock reflects the needs of the population currently and over the Plan period, an important starting point is to consider whether this profile provides different market segments access to dwellings of a suitable type and size, given their household composition.

### 5.4.1 House prices

101. We begin by considering the price of market housing, in particular the costs of entry-level dwellings. An entry-level dwelling can also be understood as one suitable for a household comprising two or three individuals. In order to be in conformity with Government guidance on overcrowding, such a home would require three habitable rooms (i.e. a flat or house with one or two bedrooms). Entry-level properties can therefore also be understood as one or two-bedroom flats/houses.
102. Figure 5-1 examines selected measures of house prices in Middleton St George. It shows that average prices have grown between 14% (mean) and 21% (median) over the past ten years (depending on the measure considered). Lower quartile price trends roughly follow those of the median and mean, dipping in 2011-13 and 2016 but appreciating strongly more recently.

**Figure 5-1: House prices in Middleton St George between 2009 and 2018**



Source: Land Registry PPD

103. Table 5-3 below breaks down house prices by type of house, as recorded by Land Registry Price Paid Data (PPD). It shows that detached homes are substantially more expensive than other types on average, and have appreciated by the greatest amount over the past decade, along with semi-detached homes. The value of terraced houses has fallen over the period, although this is primarily due to an unusually significant drop in 2017-18. The value of flats is highly volatile over time, which is likely a function of the relatively small sample size of 153 flats (See Type and Size chapter), meaning that the average price in any particular year is disproportionately affected by the units that happen to be sold each year.
104. Note that the average growth rate for all types is much higher than that of any of its component types. This is due the fact that a higher proportion of more expensive home types were sold in 2018 than in 2009. This aligns with the finding that larger, more expensive homes have made up a higher proportion of new housing in Middleton St George (see Type and Size chapter). While the overall trend is towards increasing prices and higher proportions of expensive home types, the relative stability in the price of more affordable types such as terraces and flats is serving an important function for households on lower incomes with the aspiration to own their own homes.

**Table 5-3: House prices by type in Middleton St George, 2008-2017**

Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Growth
Detached	£252,133	£257,709	£224,569	£242,607	£245,872	£275,051	£262,842	£267,086	£253,069	£271,047	7.5%
Semi-detached	£179,443	£145,319	£169,821	£145,747	£154,500	£187,498	£202,326	£220,441	£180,792	£193,030	7.6%
Terraced	£132,818	£142,235	£137,415	£152,438	£136,897	£152,214	£147,283	£148,914	£128,057	£126,043	-5.1%
Flats	£183,742	£174,875	£167,150	£129,817	£192,500	£185,306	£148,238	£149,786	£148,658	£177,417	-3.4%
<b>All Types</b>	<b>£194,716</b>	<b>£186,492</b>	<b>£174,616</b>	<b>£184,011</b>	<b>£188,759</b>	<b>£220,734</b>	<b>£210,186</b>	<b>£207,895</b>	<b>£195,778</b>	<b>£222,096</b>	<b>14.1%</b>

Source: Land Registry PPD

#### 5.4.2 Income

105. Household incomes determine the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market, and consequently the level of need for affordable housing products. As such, we have used two sources of data for household incomes in the NA.
106. The first is locally specific but limited to the average total household income and the median net annual household income. This is the average household income estimates published by ONS<sup>19</sup> at the level of the Middle-layer Super

<sup>19</sup>Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/smallareamodelbasedincomeestimates/financialyearending2016>

Output Area (MSOA)<sup>20</sup>. In the case of Middleton St George the MSOA most suitable for use as a proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary is Darlington 015 (E02002573). Further details on the extent of this MSOA, including a map, and why it was selected as a proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area, are set out in Appendix A.

107. The average net annual household income before housing costs (equalised) across Darlington 015 in 2015/16 was £31,200, while the average total annual income was £44,800. The latter figure is most commonly used by mortgage lenders to assess a household's ability to afford to borrow.<sup>21</sup>
108. The second source of data provides the Lower Quartile (LQ) average earnings, which is helpful for understanding affordability challenges among those with lower than average incomes, but it is only available at the District level and so is less locally-specific.
109. It is derived from ONS annual estimates of paid hours worked and earnings for UK employees to local authority level. Although 2018 provisional data has been published, the revised 2017 data is considered more robust and is therefore used here.
110. Darlington's gross LQ weekly earnings for 2017 was £281.30, or approximately £14,628 per year. This is the LQ income for individual earners and so only correlates with the measure of household incomes above for single-person households. To estimate the income of LQ-earning households with two earners, we have doubled the annual income, to £29,256.
111. This LQ figure is a helpful indication of what those in the lowest income brackets are able to put towards their housing costs, although it is important to note two caveats. First, this figure applies to the wider District and may therefore differ from actual LQ income levels within the NA itself. Second, it is an indication of gross rather than net incomes, and so the actual amount of income received after taxes and expenses will likely differ.

### 5.4.3 Affordability Thresholds

112. In order to gain a clearer understanding of local affordability, it is also useful to understand what levels of income are required to afford different tenures. This is done using 'affordability thresholds'. Purchase thresholds denote the standard household income needed to access mortgage products, and income thresholds denote the maximum share of a family's income that should be spent on accommodation costs.
113. We have determined thresholds for: entry-level market purchase; private rent; shared ownership at 25%, 50%, and 75%; affordable rent set at 80%, and estimated social rent levels across Middleton St George. These calculations are detailed in Appendix A. The key assumptions made in assessing the affordability of different tenures are explained alongside the calculations, but is worth noting here that we have assumed that the maximum percentage of household income that should be spent on rent is 25% and that mortgage financing will be offered at a maximum of 3.5 times household income. These assumptions will not apply in all circumstances, and it is perhaps more realistic to expect that most households will spend a higher percentage than 25% of their incomes on housing costs.
114. Table 5-4 below shows the annual cost of different tenures and the income required (excluding deposits saved) to support these costs within Middleton St George. The income required column is the annual income needed to support ongoing housing costs, but does not reflect the cost of a deposit (which we have assumed to be 10% of the value to be purchased).

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<sup>20</sup> An MSOA is a statistical area defined for Census purposes. For further information on MSOAs, see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography>

<sup>21</sup> Total annual household income is the sum of the gross income of every member of the household plus any income from benefits such as Working Families Tax Credit.

**Table 5-4: Affordability thresholds in Middleton St George (income required, £)**

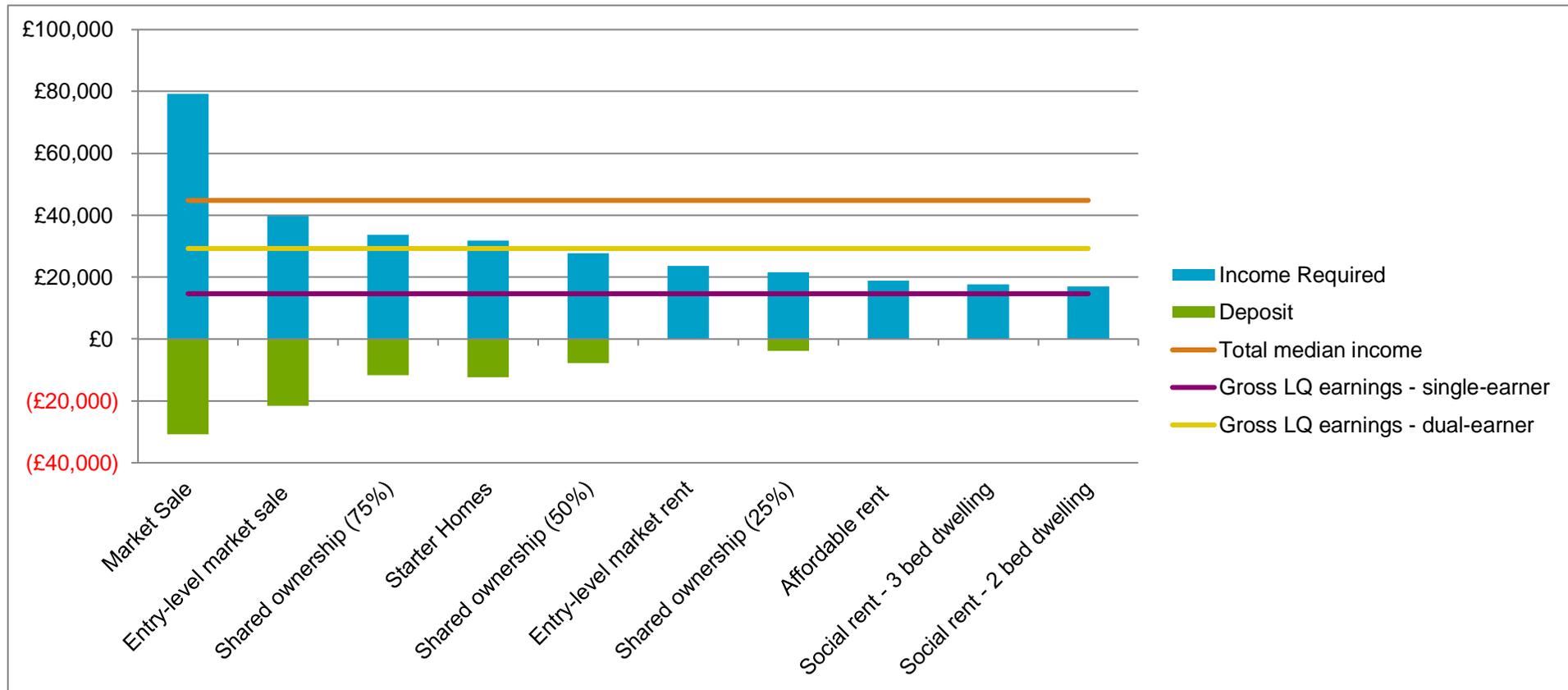
Tenure	Cost of purchase	Annual rent	Income required
Market sale	£308,400	N/A	£79,300
Entry-level market sale	£139,500	N/A	£39,857
Shared ownership (75%)	£104,625	£3,875	£33,768
Starter homes	£111,600	N/A	£31,886
Entry-level market rent	£69,750	£7,750	£27,679
Shared ownership (50%)	N/A	£5,888	£23,552
Shared ownership (25%)	£34,875	£11,625	£21,589
Affordable rent	N/A	£4,710	£18,842
Social rent - 3 bed dwelling	N/A	£4,411	£17,643
Social rent - 2 bed dwelling	N/A	£4,233	£16,931

Source: AECOM Calculations

115. The income required to afford the different tenures is then benchmarked, in Figure 5-2 below, against the three measurements of household income set out previously. These are the average total household incomes for the local area (Darlington 015) at £44,800 and the lower quartile gross household income for Darlington at £14,628 for single-person households and £29,256 for dual-earning households.
116. Taking into consideration the affordability thresholds set out above, it is apparent that single-earning households on lower quartile incomes are unable to afford any of the housing tenures under consideration. However, the lower quartile income data does not reflect housing benefits or other forms of financial assistance. For this reason it is assumed that most households on lower quartile incomes would be able to access social rented accommodation (or housing benefit to access private renting) were it in sufficient supply, or that single-person households and can meet their housing needs in studio or 1 bedroom dwellings, which may be cheaper than the 2 bedroom dwellings used to represent entry-level dwellings here.
117. Yet it is clear for such households that market renting (other than rooms in a shared house) and any form of home ownership (whether subsidised or otherwise) is out of reach in Middleton St George. For this reason, securing as much additional Affordable Housing – particular social and affordable rented tenures – should be a priority.
118. For dual-earning households on LQ incomes and households that earn the median income for the area, the majority of tenures are within reach, although average market sale properties are unaffordable to those on average incomes. Market housing for sale is the least accessible tenure, the cost of entry level market rent is relatively affordable. For those earning below the income threshold required to afford market rent, some may be able spend a higher proportion of their income on rent than the 25% assumption used here. For others, Affordable Housing for rent may be an option.
119. Government policy aimed at tackling the housing crisis continues to focus on helping those on modest incomes and others who are unable to afford market housing for purchase, such as younger buyers, to access affordable routes towards homeownership.<sup>22</sup> In the case of Middleton St George, the figure below suggests that the most appropriate tenures to help implement this policy goal locally are shared ownership at various levels of equity, while Starter Homes are not particularly affordable. As explored in greater detail in Appendix A, the cost of Starter Homes may also be higher still in practice due to ambiguity in the way that prices are set.

<sup>22</sup> See the White Paper 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market', at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/590464/Fixing\\_our\\_broken\\_housing\\_market\\_-\\_print\\_ready\\_version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590464/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_print_ready_version.pdf)

Figure 5-2: Affordability thresholds in Middleton St George (income required, £)



Source: AECOM Calculations

## 5.5 Affordable rented housing- quantity needed

120. The SHMA 2015 focuses on identifying needs amongst households living in unsuitable housing and those who cannot afford to rent in the market. If the SHMA's figures are pro rated to Middleton St George, this implies the need for 108 affordable homes over the plan period (6.4 per annum). AECOM's review of the SHMA methodology suggests that this need is largely for social/affordable rented homes. The SHMA does not provide a complete assessment of the need (or potential demand) from households who can afford to rent but are unable to afford to buy and would prefer to do so.
121. AECOM has produced two separate estimates of the need for affordable rented and affordable home ownership homes, reflecting recent changes to the NPPF which have introduced new affordable home ownership tenures into the definition of Affordable Housing. Policy makers, therefore, need to have an understanding of the likely need (or potential demand) for these tenures alongside the need for social/affordable rent.
122. In Table 5-5 below we have calculated, using PPG as a starting point,<sup>23</sup> an estimate of the total need for affordable rented housing in Middleton St George over the Plan period. This does not include those who can afford market rent but not to own their own home.
123. It should be noted that the accuracy of the findings generated by the model is only as strong as the evidence we have available to us. However, given the test of proportionality for evidence supporting neighbourhood plans, and the need to be in conformity with Local Authority strategic policies, the calculations set out in Table 5-5 are considered a reasonable basis for understanding and planning for neighbourhood-level affordable housing need. Furthermore, the inclusion of information provided by Darlington Borough Council relating to their housing register is considered up-to-date and reliable.
124. The table shows that there are currently around 31 households in Middleton St George unable to access affordable housing tenures suitable to their needs. The table also suggests that, over the Plan period, 7 additional households in the Neighbourhood Plan area will fall into need, producing total affordable housing need of 38 households. This equates to approximately 2 dwellings per year during the Plan period. Note, for context, that the SHMA identified total Affordable Housing need for Darlington Borough of 155 dwellings per annum (6.4 per annum).
125. Table 5-6 provides a separate estimate for the number of households who might need affordable home ownership. This is a simplified assessment of the needs of these households but considered reasonable and proportionate for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. These are households who can afford to rent in the market but cannot afford to buy and may prefer to do so. These households are additional to those identified in Table 4-5 and those identified in the SHMA (although there may be some overlap at the margins). This estimate suggests there may be potential demand for around 128 (rounded) affordable home ownership dwellings over the plan period (7.6 per annum).
126. It is worth noting that often when the needs of households who cannot afford ownership (but can afford rent) are assessed they appear higher in scale than the need for rented homes. This is because the population of this group is larger, though it is important to keep in mind that their needs are less urgent and the majority are accommodated in the private rented sector. They do not lack housing but would prefer to be accommodated in a different tenure. The supply of homes in the PRS is not taken into account in meeting their needs.
127. It is important to realise that these figures do not overlap entirely with, or supersede, the overall Housing Need Figure for the Neighbourhood Plan area, calculated in the Quantity chapter of this report. Rather, they have an unspecified degree of overlap with it. There is no policy or legal obligation on the part either of the Local Authority or neighbourhood planners for it to be met in full, either within or outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, though there are tools available to neighbourhood planners that can help ensure that it is met to a greater extent if resources permit.
128. It is also important to remember that even after the Middleton St George, or indeed any other, Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, the assessment of need for Affordable Housing, its allocation to those in need and the management of the housing waiting list all remain the responsibility of the local authority rather than neighbourhood planners.
129. In this sense, it must be acknowledged that neighbourhood plans are by their nature relatively constrained in terms of the extent to which they can meet affordable housing need, unless there is a specific policy on the housing supply-side (e.g. the identification of one or more housing exception sites over and above those required by the Local Plan).

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<sup>23</sup> Paragraphs 024-026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20140306, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

**Table 5-5 : Affordable Housing Model as applied to Middleton St George**

Step	Stage	Source	Calculations (rounded)	Stage and Step Description
<b>1. CURRENT HOUSING NEED (GROSS)</b>				
a	Homeless households	Census 2011 (QS101EW)	0	<p>The 2011 Census recorded 0 homeless households in the parish of Middleton St George. Though the parish boundary does not overlap precisely with that of the NA, it is the closest available proxy for this dataset.</p> <p>Note that the SHMA found a significant decline in Homelessness in Darlington between 2001 and 2011: from 43 to 5 households, though it acknowledges that figures have risen since 2011.</p>
b	Priority need on housing waiting list	Darlington Borough Council	12	<p>As of August 2019, DBC advises that there are 12 households on the affordable housing waiting list with a current address in Middleton St George. These households fall into priority bands 1-3, on grounds of welfare, medical need, homelessness or overcrowding. The figure does not include 17 further households in band 4 who are deemed not to have immediate need. It is important to note that this data does not cover any areas where Darlington has no Affordable Housing – which includes Middleton One Row and Oak Tree.</p> <p>According to the SHMA, across Darlington the number of households in priority categories on the housing register fell sharply in 2009 and has remained stable up to 2014.</p>
c	Overcrowded households	Census 2011 (QS412EW)	18	<p>Assumption applied that the number remains the same as in the 2011 Census, in which Middleton St George recorded 19 households with a bedroom occupancy rating of -1 or less. As 1 household on the waiting list is in need due to overcrowding, this household is discounted to leave a total of 18.</p> <p>Overcrowding in Darlington is increasing much more slowly than nationwide (4% over 2001-2011 compared with 23% for England). It is decreasing in owner-occupied and social rented housing but increasing in the private rented sector.</p>
d	Concealed households	Census 2011	14	<p>Assumption applied that the number remains the same as in the 2011 Census, in which Middleton St George recorded 14 households who were concealed, and that these households are not registered on the Housing Needs Register.</p> <p>Note that the SHMA found a 38% increase in the number of concealed families across Darlington between 2001 and 2011.</p>

Step	Stage	Source	Calculations (rounded)	Stage and Step Description
e	Affordable Housing provision since 2011	Darlington Borough Council	13	As of August 2019, DBC advises that 13 Affordable Housing units have been delivered in Middleton St George since 2011. This can be assumed to satisfy an equal number of households in backlog need.
f	<b>Backlog need</b>	AECOM	<b>31</b>	Sum of stages a-d, minus e
<b>2. NEWLY ARISING NEED</b>				
g	Number of households in 2011	Census 2011	1755	The 2011 Census recorded a total of 1755 households in Middleton St George.
h	Average annual household formation between 2011 and end of Plan period	MHCLG 2014-based household projections; AECOM calculations	5.5	Taking households in 2011 in Middleton St George as a proportion of all households in the LPA (3.76%), Middleton St George's share of LPA household growth by the end of the Plan period (50,324 households in 2036 less 46,670 in 2011 = 3,654) will be 137 (rounded) (3,654 x 3.76%). This equates to an annual increase of 5.5 households.
i	New household formation between 2011 and 2019	AECOM calculations	44	$h \times 8$ (number of years between 2011 and 2019)
j	Estimated current number of households	AECOM calculations	1,799	Sum of g + i
k	New household formation between 2019 and end of Plan period	AECOM calculations	94	$h \times 17$ (number of years between 2019 and 2036)
l	Proportion of newly forming households unable to access market housing	AECOM calculations	7.7%	On account of the lack of income data available at Middleton St George level, the formula used to determine the proportion of newly-forming households unable to access market housing comprises the number of people in social housing at the time of the 2011 Census (95) + full backlog need, with no deductions for recently added stock (44) divided by all households (1,799).
m	<b>Newly Arising Need</b>	AECOM calculations	<b>7</b>	$k \times l$
n	<b>TOTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED</b>		<b>38</b>	Sum of f + m

Source: Darlington Borough Council data, Census 2011, AECOM calculations

**Table 5-6: Affordable Housing Model as applied to Middleton St George**

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
<b>STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED</b>		
1.1 Current number of renters in NA	264.5	Census 2011 number of renters x national % increase to 2018
1.2 Percentage renters on housing benefit in LA	33.6%	% of renters in 2018 on housing benefit (based on LA proportion)
1.3 Number of renters on housing benefits in NA	88.9	1.1 x 1.2
1.4 Current need (households)	131.7	Current renters minus those on HB and minus 25% assumed to rent by choice
1.5 Per annum	<b>7.7</b>	1.4/ plan period
<b>STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED</b>		
2.1 New household formation	101.6	LA household projections for plan period (2014 based) pro rated to NA
2.2 % of households unable to buy but able to rent	8.1%	Current % of households in PRS
2.3 Total newly arising need	8.2	2.1 x 2.2
2.4 Total newly arising need per annum	<b>0.5</b>	2.3/ plan period
<b>STAGE 3: SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING</b>		
3.1 Supply of affordable housing	13.0	Number of shared ownership homes in NA (Census 2011 + new build to 2018/19)
3.2 Supply - intermediate resales	<b>0.6</b>	13 x 5% (assume rate of re-sale)
<b>NET SHORTFALL (OR SURPLUS) PER ANNUM</b>		
<b>Shortfall (per annum)</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>Shortfall = (Step 1.5 + Step 2.4) – 3.2</b>

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, CLG 2014 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

### 5.5.1 Tenure split within Affordable Housing

130. In terms of the most appropriate mix of tenures within Affordable Housing, it is important to reference Darlington-level policy guidance or evidence, which will be based upon more detailed income data and viability assessments that are not able to be undertaken in a HNA. Neither the adopted or emerging Local Plan for Darlington specifies a target split within Affordable Housing. However, the SHMA includes a table (Figure 53) that estimates the number of Affordable Housing units needed by tenure.<sup>24</sup> The SHMA estimates that 79% of Affordable Housing should be provided as social or affordable rent, with the remaining 21% provided as intermediate tenures providing a route to home ownership.

131. Whilst the SHMA did not assess the full need (or potential demand) for affordable home ownership, AECOM suggest that broad adherence to the split recommended in the SHMA would be a reasonable approach at the neighbourhood level. The reasoning for this is as follows:

- Of the 136-dwelling indicative housing need figure (8 per annum) provided for the NA in this HNA, 27 Affordable Housing units (1.6 per annum) should be delivered in accordance with the 20% Affordable Housing requirement in emerging Local Plan. This level of expected delivery is not sufficient to meet local need as evidenced in this HNA, even for the social/affordable rented homes required. It is therefore critical that the 20% delivery requirement is met wherever possible in Middleton St George. Should the community wish to further boost the supply of Affordable Housing there are other routes available to providing it. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all tried and tested ways of increasing the supply of affordable housing above the minima indicated by Local Plan policy.
- Whilst there is evidence of substantial potential demand for affordable home ownership homes, the priority is likely to be the delivery of social/affordable rented homes to meet the most urgent needs.

<sup>24</sup> It does so for two alternative assumptions relating to the percentage of household income that can be spent on rent: 25% and 35%. The assumption used in the section of this report concerning affordability thresholds is 25%, so for consistency the estimate of 25% in the SHMA is used.

- 132. In the event that the final Housing Requirement Figure provided by Darlington is higher than the indicative figure provided in this HNA, there may be greater scope to provide more affordable housing and to consider a broader range of products.
- 133. In Table 5-7 below, we take forward this estimate and further break down the tenure split into its component parts based on the analysis of affordability thresholds above. It is recommended that for Middleton St George around 79% should be social rented tenures, in line with the SHMA evidence and the finding above that those on lower quartile incomes may only be able to afford social rent, and that 21% should be intermediate tenures (predominantly shared ownership because of the high cost of Starter Homes).
- 134. This tenure split should be considered a guideline for the ideal mix of tenures to be delivered within the NA. However, it is based foremost upon district-level guidance that benefits from detailed local income data and studies of development viability, with the more detailed breakdown based on the conclusions of our affordability analysis. As such, it will be a useful point of reference when planning applications are considered, but may not represent sufficient justification for the tenure split to be enforced precisely through a Neighbourhood Plan policy.
- 135. Where the neighbourhood planners wish to craft policy that enforces this split in policy, it is important that they liaise with the LPA to gather more detailed income and viability information, and to ensure that departures from the district-level policy context have the LPA’s support. Another option is to add caveats to the policy in question, to the effect that the precise mix of affordable housing will be considered on the basis of site-by-site circumstances in addition to this evidence.

**Table 5-7: Recommended tenure split (Affordable Housing)**

<b>Routes to home ownership, of which</b>	<b>21%</b>
Starter Homes	6%
Shared Ownership (at 25%)	15%
<b>Affordable Housing for rent, of which</b>	<b>79%</b>
Social Rent	50%
Affordable Rent	29%

Source: AECOM calculations

- 136. Shared ownership is recommended as the primary affordable route to home ownership because it is the tenure that extends home ownership to the widest group. There are a number of points to bear in mind:
  - a. Despite being introduced back in the 1970s, shared ownership has only recently become mainstream. Partly because the affordability of home ownership has declined sharply in recent years and partly because Government has supported the provision of these homes through funding to housing associations.
  - b. Shared ownership is particularly known for being an affordable option for those seeking to get on the housing ladder such as newly forming households and families. It is popular due to the increased choice, control and security it offers in comparison to other tenures. Housing for new households and families is particular concern for Middleton St George and so this should be considered as an option for the NA.
  - c. However, it should be noted that there are some issues with shared ownership which should be borne in mind. For example, buyers still have to pay service charges which are not fixed and can increase unpredictably. Buyers are also responsible for the maintenance of the property, however small their share in the property. Staircasing can also be costly, given that the purchase of the additional share will rise as market values rise. Furthermore, the discount attained through renting the remaining share can in certain locations be similar to the difference in price between a new build and existing dwelling, meaning that a new shared ownership dwelling is often no more affordable than an existing dwelling offered for market sale.
  - d. Registered providers (eg housing associations) may be reluctant to deliver this tenure in rural locations as there are ongoing management costs involved. For this reason, discounted market sale homes may prove more attractive because of the more limited ongoing role for the housing association.

## 5.6 Conclusions- Tenure and Affordability

137. Middleton St George is characterised by an unusually high proportion of home ownership, as opposed to private and social renting, when compared with Darlington and England as a whole. While this could be taken to indicate a housing market where home ownership is within reach of most people, a more detailed analysis of affordability reveals that this is not the case. In the most recent ten-year period, the average lower quartile house price has appreciated by 19%.
138. In this context it is unsurprising that the rate of private renting in Middleton St George increased by 250% in the decade between 2001 and 2011. Over that period, households unable to afford home ownership sought out the next most affordable widely available option, with more homes being put up for rent to satisfy growing demand, while households who would have at other times met their needs through social housing are increasingly obliged to rent privately while relying on housing benefit. Private renting therefore provides an important function in the housing market and, due to its still comparatively low availability, should continue to grow.
139. However, to ensure that households on lower than average incomes can afford to continue living in Middleton St George or form their own independent households, especially if reforms to welfare including housing benefit are implemented in the coming years, it will be important to diversify the tenure offering beyond these two most common open-market options.
140. The social rented sector in the NA is small. The share of social renting in the wider Borough is three times the size of the share in Middleton St George. Given that this is the only secure tenure within reach of single-earning households on lower quartile incomes (some may access private rented dwellings through housing benefit) the number of social or affordable rented homes should be increased wherever possible. Other forms of Affordable Housing that offer a route to home ownership, such as shared ownership, should also be promoted as a way to enable households on lower incomes to own their own homes should they wish to do so.
141. Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by Borough-wide planning policies that require it to be included at a set proportion of larger market housing developments. This policy expectation in Middleton St George, if the emerging Darlington Local Plan is adopted without changes to its draft policies, is that 20% of new housing on developments providing 11 dwellings or more will be affordable.
142. Of the 136 dwellings that our calculations indicate should be provided in Middleton St George over the Plan period, 27 Affordable Housing units should be delivered. This figure is lower than the 38 households that are projected to be in need of Affordable Housing to rent over the same period (AECOM's estimate). AECOM's estimate suggests there is additional potential demand for affordable home ownership of 128 dwellings over the plan period (7.6 per annum). If the majority of new housing is delivered through windfall development on small sites dispersed around the NA, many of these sites will not meet the requirement of providing 11 or more dwellings and so the number of Affordable Housing units will be lower still.
143. However, if the 6 major sites currently proposed to be allocated in Middleton St George in the emerging Darlington Local Plan, which total 731 dwellings, are delivered, 146 Affordable Housing units will be provided, which is in excess of the local need for social/affordable rented homes, but will help to meet the needs of locations throughout the Borough that are considered less sustainable for residential development and may also offer the opportunity to deliver more affordable home ownership products. It may also be the case that the Affordable Housing will be delivered in part outside of the NA, subject to ongoing discussions with DBC.
144. Although this level of delivery is deemed to be more than sufficient to meet local need, if the community wishes to boost the supply of Affordable Housing there are other routes available to providing it. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all tried and tested ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing above the minima indicated by Local Plan policy.
145. Regardless of the total quantity to be provided, of the Affordable Housing units to be delivered, it is recommended that approximately 79% be offered as social or affordable rent, with the remaining 21% delivered as affordable routes to home ownership, with an emphasis on shared ownership as opposed to starter homes (which are less affordable in this area).
146. Finally, it is worth noting that flats and terraced homes have not experienced the same levels of price appreciation as the detached and semi-detached homes that have been built in high volumes in recent years. It is assumed that their relative affordability holds in the rented sector as well.
147. The need to improve affordability in Middleton St George across all tenures aligns with our findings in relation to the type and size of homes – that new residential development should ensure a substantial proportion of smaller dwellings.

Increasing the proportion of smaller homes and more affordable types (as above) should help to rebalance the housing stock in favour of options that are both suitable to the population profile as it evolves over time and that will combat growing affordability challenges.

## 6. RQ 3: Type and Size

**RQ 3: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of habitable rooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?**

### 6.1 Introduction

148. The Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan will need to include policies informed by robust data on what sizes and types of housing would be best suited to the local community. This will help ensure that future developments give local people at all stages of life the options they require, while keeping the market operating efficiently.
149. PPG recommends a consideration of the existing housing provision and its suitability, having regard to demographic shifts in age and household composition, to address future, as well as current community need. For this reason, we firstly consider the type and size of the existing housing stock in Middleton St George. Demographic shifts in age and household composition will then be considered. Finally, the future demand for housing by size and type will be determined by the way different household types currently occupy their dwellings in the LPA, and then applying to that baseline assessment demographic projections of how the Neighbourhood Plan area population is likely to change by the end of the Plan period.

### 6.2 Existing types and sizes

#### 6.2.1 Background and definitions

150. Before beginning our consideration of dwelling type and size, it is important to understand how different types of households occupy their homes. Crucially, and unsurprisingly, household 'consumption' of housing (in terms of housing size) tends to increase alongside wages, with the highest earning households consuming relatively more (i.e. larger) housing than those on lower incomes. Similarly, housing consumption tends to increase, alongside wealth, income, and age, such that older households tend to have larger homes than younger households, often as a result of cost and affordability.
151. In this context, even smaller households (those with fewer than three inhabitants) may be able to choose to live in larger homes than they require, and thus would be defined in Census terms as under-occupying their homes. This is a natural feature of the housing market, and can distort considerations of future housing needs, with market dynamics and signals giving a very different picture than demographics, household type and size would suggest for future years.
152. In order to understand the terminology surrounding dwelling size analysis, it is important to note that the number of rooms recorded in Census data excludes some rooms such as bathrooms, toilets and halls. Dwelling size data is collected by determining the number of rooms being occupied by each household. In the section that follows, 'dwelling sizes' should thus be translated as follows<sup>25</sup>:
- 1 room = bedsit
  - 2 rooms = flat/house with one bedroom and a reception room/kitchen
  - 3 rooms = flat/house 1-2 bedrooms and one reception room and/or kitchen
  - 4 rooms = flat/house with 2 bedroom, one reception room and one kitchen
  - 5 rooms = flat/house with 3 bedrooms, one reception room and one kitchen
  - 6 rooms = house with 3 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms and a kitchen, or 4 bedrooms and one reception room and a kitchen
  - 7+ rooms = house with 4 or more bedrooms
153. It is also useful to clarify the Census terminology around dwellings and households spaces. These can be confusing where different terminologies such as flats, apartments, shared and communal dwellings, and houses in multiple occupation, are used. Dwellings are counted in the Census by combining address information with Census returns on whether people's accommodation is self-contained.<sup>26</sup> As such, all dwellings are classified into either "shared" or "unshared" dwellings. Household spaces make up the individual accommodation units forming part of a shared dwelling.

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<sup>25</sup> At <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs407ew>

<sup>26</sup> At <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dwelling-stock-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-hfr-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form>

154. The key measure of whether a dwelling is shared or unshared relates to the Census' definition of a household. A household is defined as "One person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area."<sup>27</sup> On this basis, where unrelated residents of a dwelling share rooms other than a kitchen, this would be considered a single household in an unshared dwelling, whilst where only a kitchen is shared, each resident would be considered their own household, and the dwelling would be considered shared.

### 6.2.2 Dwelling type

155. The 2011 Census shows that there were 1811 households in Middleton St George, living in 821 detached houses, 496 semi-detached, 335 terraced houses, and 153 flats. Middleton St George is characterised by a proportion of detached houses that is almost twice as large as Darlington's, with significantly lower proportions of semi-detached and terraced homes accordingly. Lower still is the proportion of flats found in the NA, at nearly five times lower than either the Borough or national average (see Table 6-1 below).

**Table 6-1: Accommodation type (households), Middleton St George 2011**

Dwelling type		Middleton St George	Darlington	England
Whole house or bungalow	Detached	60.2%	31.1%	22.4%
	Semi-detached	22.8%	31.5%	31.2%
	Terraced	12.9%	24.9%	24.5%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	Purpose-built block of flats or tenement	2.1%	10.0%	16.4%
	Parts of a converted or shared house	1.4%	1.3%	3.8%
	In commercial building	0.5%	0.9%	1.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

### 6.2.3 Dwelling size

156. Table 6-2 below sets out the distribution of the number of rooms by household space. The housing stock in Middleton St George is characterised by notably higher proportions of large homes than in the Borough. The combined proportion of homes with 7 or more rooms is 43.9% in Middleton St George, more than double the 21.7% such homes represent in Darlington as a whole. This finding aligns with the fact described in relation to dwelling types above, in that detached homes tend to be larger.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

**Table 6-2: Number of rooms per household in Middleton St George, 2011**

Number of Rooms	2011	2011
	Middleton St George	Darlington
1 Room	0.1%	0.3%
2 Rooms	0.9%	1.6%
3 Rooms	3.8%	8.2%
4 Rooms	13.7%	20.1%
5 Rooms	20.2%	26.0%
6 Rooms	17.5%	22.0%
7 Rooms	18.4%	10.2%
8 Rooms or more	11.5%	6.2%
9 Rooms or more	14.0%	5.3%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

157. It is also relevant to consider how the number of rooms occupied by households changed between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. The greatest change in the NA has occurred within the 3 room category, which has doubled in size from 33 to 66 such homes over the ten years to 2011. It is worth emphasising that 66 homes is equivalent to the 3.8% of all homes finding in the table above; the 33 dwellings with 3 rooms represented just 2.3% of all homes at the time of the 2001 Census. This extremely low baseline is the cause of what at first glance appears to be substantial growth.
158. The very large 7 and 8 or more room categories of dwelling have, however, experienced significant rates of growth from large starting figures. There were 266 homes with 8 or more rooms in 2001, rising to 448 in 2011, for example. It should be noted, however, that this is broadly in line with the Borough and national trend: at both of these scales, the size of dwelling to experience the largest increase in frequency was that of 8 or more rooms. This is partly attributable to the disproportionate share of new housing that is marketed as executive housing.
159. Middleton St George saw a two-thirds decline in 1 room dwellings, with two of the three homes of this size being either extended, knocked-through, or demolished between the two censuses. The 5 and 6 room categories also underwent a marginal contraction, for reasons that were not possible to discern from the evidence surveyed here.
160. Overall, then, Middleton St George has an unusually large stock of housing that has grown larger over time.

**Table 6-3: Rates of change in number of rooms per household in Middleton St George, 2001-2011**

Number of Rooms	Middleton St George	Darlington	England
1 Room	-66.7%	-7.8%	-5.2%
2 Rooms	25.0%	1.9%	24.2%
3 Rooms	100.0%	19.2%	20.4%
4 Rooms	28.3%	6.9%	3.5%
5 Rooms	-5.3%	2.1%	-1.8%
6 Rooms	-5.2%	1.3%	2.1%
7 Rooms	41.0%	28.5%	17.9%
8 Rooms or more	68.4%	45.9%	29.8%

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

161. Returning to the most recent Census data, it is also useful to compare the figures for number of rooms with figures for the number of bedrooms for each household. Table 6-4 below summarises the proportion of households occupying each size of home in terms of the number of bedrooms. This data again shows that Middleton St George has relatively high proportions of the largest homes, with a particularly high share of 4 bedroom and particularly low share of 1 bedroom homes compared with Borough and national averages.

**Table 6-4: Number of bedrooms in household spaces in Middleton St George, 2011**

Bedrooms	Middleton St. George		Darlington		England	
<b>All categories: no. of bedrooms</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>46,670</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>22,063,368</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
No. bedrooms	1	0.1%	103	0.2%	54,938	0.2%
1 bedroom	58	3.8%	4,242	9.1%	2,593,893	11.8%
2 bedrooms	353	23.1%	15,645	33.5%	6,145,083	27.9%
3 bedrooms	517	33.8%	19,090	40.9%	9,088,213	41.2%
4 bedrooms	486	31.8%	5,982	12.8%	3,166,531	14.4%
5 or more bedrooms	115	7.5%	1,608	3.4%	1,014,710	4.6%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

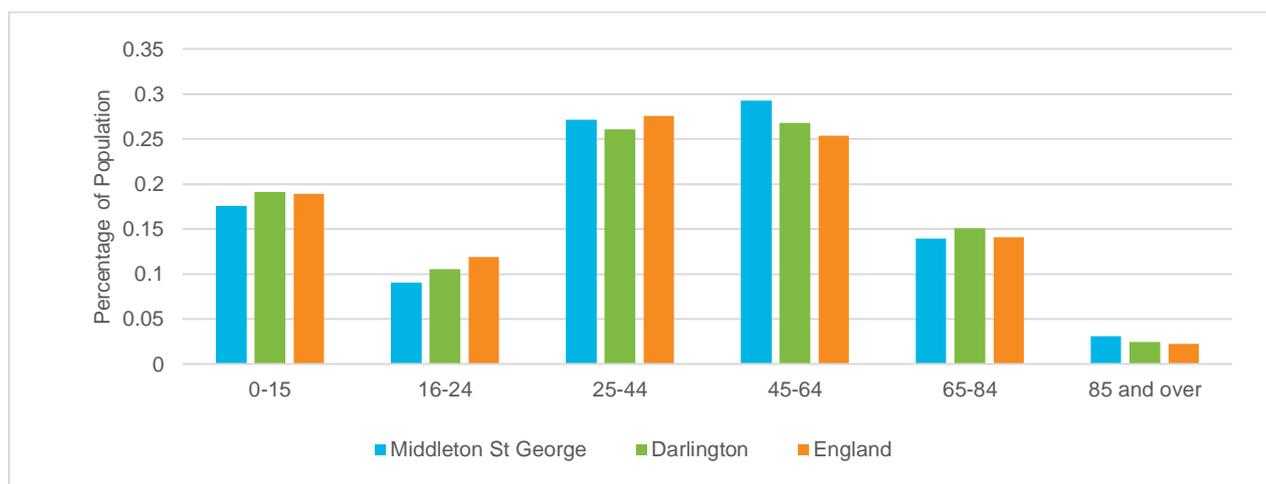
### 6.3 Household composition and age structure

162. We have now established the current stock profile of Middleton St George and identified recent changes in its composition. The evidence assembled below examines the composition and age structure of households both in the 2011 Census and in future years. Through a consideration of the types of households projected to form over the Neighbourhood Plan period, the mix of age groups suggested by demographic projections, and the characteristics of the existing stock of homes, it becomes possible to consider the type and size of housing needed in the Neighbourhood Plan area over the planning period.

#### 6.3.1 Age structure

163. The 2011 Census reveals that Middleton St George has a high proportion of people in the 45-65 and 85 and over age categories than both higher-level geographies (see Figure 6-1 below). The 65-84 age group is roughly in line with Darlington and England, but it is the 0-15 and 16-24 age groups where Middleton St George has a lower population than those wider areas. So while Middleton St George’s population may be expected to age faster than the Borough, its chief demographic challenge is the deficit in the younger replacement population.

**Figure 6-1: Age structure in Middleton St George, 2011**



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

164. In contrast to the impression given by the above data, in terms of the changing age structure of the population (see Table 6-5 below), Census data shows that since 2001 Middleton St George has seen a decline in the older population and an increase in the younger population. The 16-24 and 45-64 age groups have expanded the fastest, with only the 85 and over population contracting – a trend that is not perceived at the scale of the Borough or the country. The

increase in the younger population could help to balance out the significant ageing that can be expected as the large 45-64 age group reaches retirement age over the Plan period.

**Table 6-5: Rate of change in the age structure of Middleton St George population, 2001-2011**

Age group	Middleton St George	Darlington	England
0-15	3.0%	2.1%	1.2%
16-24	35.6%	18.5%	17.2%
25-44	13.6%	-0.7%	1.4%
45-64	20.8%	16.5%	15.2%
65-84	8.0%	8.3%	9.1%
85 and over	-10.1%	28.4%	23.7%

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

### 6.3.2 Household composition

165. Household composition is a critical factor in driving the size (and to an extent, the type) of housing needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
166. In assessing Census data on household composition, we see that Middleton St George differs from the Borough in that there are lower numbers of one person households and more families. However, the NA has a notably higher proportion of family households with no children (Table 6-6 below).

**Table 6-6: Household composition (by household), Middleton St George, 2011**

Household composition		Middleton St George	Darlington	England
<b>One person household</b>	<b>Total</b>	24.9%	32.4%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	9.5%	13.1%	12.4%
	Other	15.4%	19.2%	17.9%
<b>One family only</b>	<b>Total</b>	70.9%	62.9%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	8.8%	8.3%	8.1%
	With no children	23.4%	18.5%	17.6%
	With dependent children	29.1%	27.1%	26.5%
	All children Non-Dependent	9.6%	9.1%	9.6%
<b>Other household types</b>	<b>Total</b>	4.2%	4.7%	8.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

167. Again, it is relevant to consider rates of change in this indicator during the period between Censuses. Between 2001 and 2011, the main changes in household composition were significant growth in the one person household category, most notably with a significant 78.8% increase in one person households under the age of 65. There was also strong growth in the one family household category, which in combination with the aforementioned increase in one person households indicates a generally higher rate of population growth overall than was seen in Darlington and England (see Table 6-7).
168. Seen in the context of Middleton St George's relatively large stock of dwellings, the trend toward single occupancy may warrant the provision of smaller homes going forward, although this should be balanced in light of the trends towards more families with children, which require larger homes and the fact that many single households choose and can afford to occupy larger homes.
169. Middleton St George experienced a higher rate of growth in the number of households with children as well as a greater growth rate among households with dependent children – perhaps including students living with parents or a growing share of young people unable to afford to live in their own independent households due to local housing costs.

**Table 6-7: Rates of change in household composition, Middleton St George, 2001-2011**

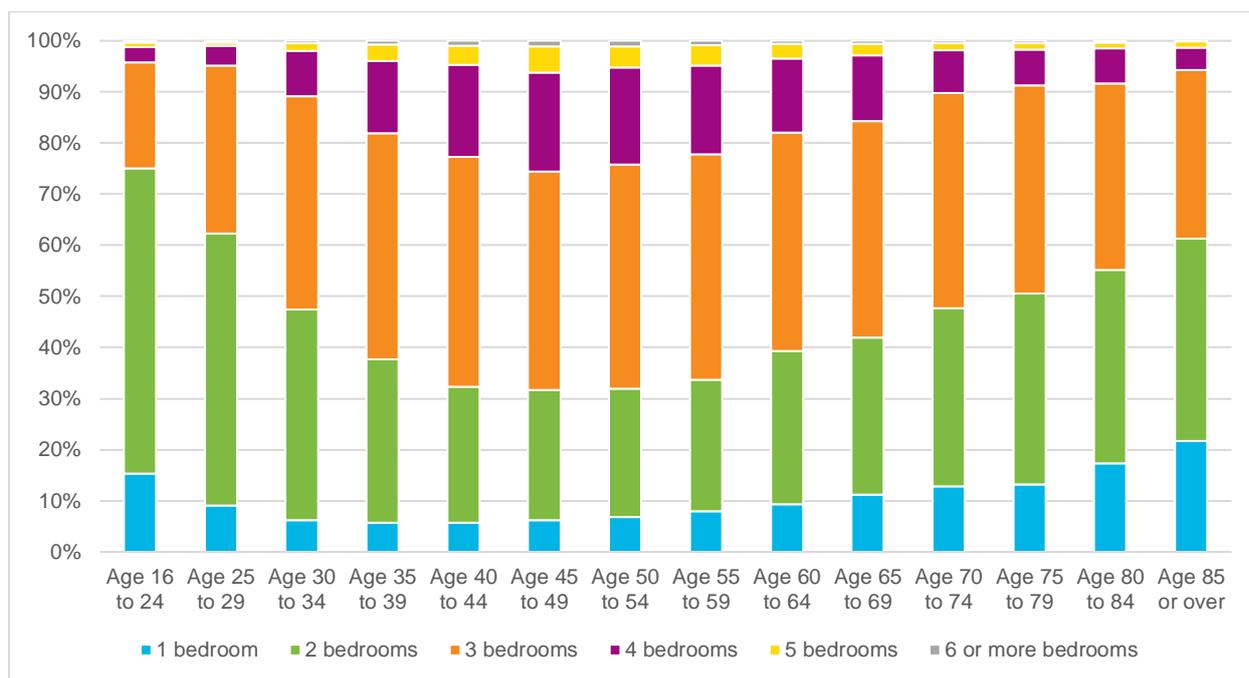
Household type		Percentage change, 2001-2011		
		Middleton St George	Darlington	England
<b>One person household</b>	<b>Total</b>	38.7%	12.4%	8.4%
	Aged 65 and over	1.8%	-7.7%	-7.3%
	Other	78.8%	32.0%	22.7%
<b>One family only</b>	<b>Total</b>	18.4%	8.3%	5.4%
	All aged 65 and over	30.3%	1.4%	-2.0%
	With no children	16.8%	12.3%	7.1%
	With dependent children	15.6%	7.3%	5.0%
	All children non-dependent	20.9%	10.3%	10.6%
<b>Other household types</b>	<b>Total</b>	23.3%	25.4%	28.9%

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

## 6.4 Dwelling mix determined by life-stage modelling

170. Recognising the fact that households of different ages have different housing needs, to estimate the housing mix needed by the end of the Plan period AECOM adopt an approach based on the assumption that current occupation patterns – that is, the propensity of households of different ages to occupy different types of accommodation – will persist into the future. For example, projected growth in households aged under 24 will lead to an increase in the need for the type of housing currently occupied by households of that age.
171. However, no data on housing size occupation by age of the Household Reference Person (HRP - a more modern term for 'head of household') is available at neighbourhood level. For this reason, Borough-level data is used as the closest proxy.
172. Figure 6-2 below sets out the relationship in the 2011 Census at Borough level between the age of the HRP and the size of dwelling occupied. This provides the starting point for determining the most appropriate dwelling size mix by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. The data shows that 2 bedroom properties are by far the most popular choice in the youngest age group, and remain so until the 30-34 category. At this point, 3 bedroom properties become the most popular choice, with this remaining the case until 2 bedroom properties once again become more popular in the 80-84 category.
173. 4 bedroom properties follow a pattern that is largely proportional to the popularity of 3 bedroom properties, peaking in the 45-49 category before declining again. 5 bedroom properties follow a similar but less prominent pattern, whilst 1 bedroom properties more closely track the popularity of 2 bed properties: they are most popular with the youngest and oldest demographics.

**Figure 6-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size in Darlington, 2011**



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

174. AECOM then use household projections provided by MHCLG to achieve an understanding of the future distribution of households by the age of the HRP. Again, this data is only available at the Borough level and for the years 2014 and 2039. Therefore, we have estimated what the distribution of households by the age of the HRP would be in 2036, i.e. the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (red in the table). The data is presented in Table 6-8 below.

**Table 6-8: Projected distribution of households by age of HRP, Darlington**

Year	Age of HRP 24 and under	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
2011	1,838	6,625	17,970	7,925	12,312
2014	2,000	6,339	17,292	7,822	13,645
2036	1,904	5,644	16,056	7,574	19,032
2039	1,891	5,550	15,887	7,541	19,766

Source(s): MHCLG 2014-based household projections, ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

175. At this point, it is necessary to extrapolate from this Borough-level data an estimate of the corresponding change in the age structure of the population in Middleton St George. To do so, the percentage increase expected for each group across Darlington, derived from the data presented above, was mapped to the population of Middleton St George. 2011 was used as the base year for calculating the rate of growth because 2011 Census data is more reliable than the 2014 projections. The results of this calculation are detailed in Table 6-9 below.

176. It is immediately clear from this exercise that Middleton St George's population can be expected to experience ageing: its demographic profile in 2036 is dominated by the 65 and over and 35 to 54 age groups, but while the former is growing the latter is declining – along with all other age groups apart from the low and stable population of households aged 24 and under. It is therefore expected that the dwelling size preferences of the combined 72% of households aged 35 to 54 and 65 and over to have by far the greatest impact on the ideal dwelling mix proposed at the end of this section.

**Table 6-9: Projected distribution of households by age of HRP, Middleton St George**

Year	Age of HRP 24 and under	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
2011	30	166	664	294	376
2014	33	159	639	290	417
2036	31	141	593	281	581
% change 2011-2036	4%	-15%	-11%	-4%	55%

Source: AECOM Calculations

177. To complement the two stages above, Table 6-10 below sets out the distribution of dwellings of different sizes according to the age of the HRP as they appeared in Darlington at the time of the Census 2011. This provides the basis for a modelled estimate of the proportion of dwelling sizes that will be occupied by each age band across Middleton St George by the end of the plan period.

**Table 6-10: Age of household reference person to size, grouped, Darlington, Census 2011**

Size	Age of HRP 16 to 24	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
1 bedroom	15.3%	7.5%	6.1%	8.6%	14.5%
2 bedrooms	59.8%	46.7%	27.2%	27.8%	35.5%
3 bedrooms	20.8%	37.7%	43.9%	43.4%	39.7%
4 bedrooms	3.0%	6.6%	17.7%	16.0%	8.4%
5+ bedrooms	1.2%	1.5%	5.1%	4.2%	1.9%

Source(s): MHCLG 2014-based household projections, ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

178. Finally, having established the preference shown by households at different life-stages towards dwellings of different sizes, and the approximate number of households in Darlington and Middleton St George falling into each of these stages by the end of the Plan period in 2036, it is possible to recommend how the housing stock could evolve in terms of size over the Neighbourhood Plan period to overcome existing or future misalignments between the supply of dwellings and demand (see Table 6-11 below).
179. The table takes in turn each projected age group in 2036, estimating how many of the households in that age bracket will want or need to occupy each size of dwelling. By doing so for each age bracket and then adding together the totals for each dwelling size, we arrive at an estimation of what proportion of each size of dwelling will be required overall. By multiplying a number of households by the percentages in Table 6-10 above, the results are rarely whole numbers and are therefore presented as rounded. Because the totals are derived from the exact (non-rounded) data, not all columns and rows will sum precisely.
180. Here we see that the two dominating age groups both tend to occupy 3 bedroom homes above all other sizes, although the 65 and over age group occupy nearly as many 2 bedroom homes, while the 35 to 54 age group display a notable preference for larger homes as well as smaller ones.

**Table 6-11: Ideal dwelling size distribution in Middleton St George by the end of the Plan period, based on modelled household life-stages (totals may not sum due to rounding)**

Size	Age of HRP 16 to 24	Age of HRP under 35	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over	Total households requiring dwelling sizes
Households	31	141	593	281	581	-
1 bedroom	5	11	36	24	84	<b>160</b>
2 bedrooms	19	66	161	78	206	<b>530</b>
3 bedrooms	6	53	260	122	230	<b>673</b>
4 bedrooms	1	9	105	45	49	<b>209</b>
5+ bedrooms	0	2	30	12	11	<b>56</b>

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

181. It is now possible to compare the 2011 housing mix in terms of size with the projected requirement based on the estimates set out in Table 6-11 above.
182. Table 6-12 below indicates that, by 2036, the size distribution of dwellings should be more heavily weighted towards smaller properties than it currently is. Although we have found that the 35 to 54 population will remain high and that there is expected to be demand from families for some time, these factors are less influential than the overall ageing of the population and the attendant growth in demand for smaller homes.
183. Yet more important when comparing the current and recommended size mix is the fact that Middleton St George currently has an unusually large stock of housing. It is therefore likely that any estimate of future demand based on the occupation patterns of different age groups will contrast with what is a relatively unique baseline housing mix.
184. Perhaps most notable is the implied requirement for just 12.9% of homes to have 4 bedrooms, compared with their current frequency at 31.8% of all homes. Likewise the model finds that 5 bedroom or more homes should make up less than half the proportion they currently do, whilst all categories of 3 bedrooms or less will need to undergo significant growth to meet the proportions required.
185. Efforts to change the dwelling mix in this smaller direction would help to allow a growing older cohort of households to rightsize within their existing community if they wish to, and younger people to be able to move into suitably sized first homes, while leaving enough of the larger existing homes to meet demand from families and the prominent 35 to 54 age group.

**Table 6-12: 2011 housing sizes compared to ideal distribution at end of Plan period, Middleton St George**

Number of bedrooms	2011		2036	
1 bedroom	58	3.8%	160	9.8%
2 bedrooms	353	23.1%	530	32.6%
3 bedrooms	517	33.8%	673	41.3%
4 bedrooms	486	31.8%	209	12.9%
5 or more bedrooms	115	7.5%	56	3.4%
Total households	<b>1,530</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

186. Table 6-13 below sets out the estimated misalignment between future demand for housing, based on the modelled preferences of households at different life-stages, and the current stock available in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Table 6-13: Future potential misalignments of supply and demand for housing, Middleton St George**

Number of bedrooms	2011	2036	Change to housing mix	Recommended split of new housing to meet required mix
1 bedroom	58	160	102	23.5%
2 bedrooms	353	530	177	40.7%
3 bedrooms	517	673	156	35.8%
4 bedrooms	486	209	-277	0.0%
5 or more bedrooms	115	56	-59	0.0%

Source: AECOM Calculations

187. Note that the changes to the housing mix given above for four and five-bedroom dwellings are negative numbers. Because in light of the national and local housing shortage, it is rarely advisable or practicable to remove dwellings from the available stock, as would otherwise be suggested here for dwellings with three or more bedrooms, we have instead set the recommended split at 0% rather than a negative number, and rebalanced the other sizes as percentages of the additional dwellings they represent in total.
188. The result of the life-stage modelling exercise, therefore, is that to minimise misalignments between supply and demand at the neighbourhood level, 23.5% of dwellings in new developments should have 1 bedroom, 40.7% should have two bedrooms, 35.8% should have three bedrooms, and no further dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms are needed.
189. Such a distribution of new supply by size should help to address unmet demand from younger households and those intending to downsize. It would also make a valuable contribution to diversifying a stock of housing that is dominated by large dwelling sizes.
190. However, this recommendation should be applied with a degree of flexibility because it may not be reasonable in practice strictly to limit the provision of dwellings with four or more bedrooms, and in fact, such a restriction has the potential to negatively impact the viability of sites that could help to deliver Affordable Housing or other community priorities. It should also be noted that this report is concerned with demand in the sense of need rather than in the sense of the preferences of potential occupants, which will likely include demand for larger homes. There may also be good reasons to deliver larger properties in the NA as part of a housing mix strategy in the Borough as a whole.

#### 6.4.1 SHMA findings

191. The SHMA proposes a dwelling size mix for market housing as presented in Table 6-14 below, which reproduces Figure 52 from Part 1 and converts its totals into percentages. There is a similar emphasis on 2 and 3 bedroom homes, as well as a lack of emphasis on dwellings with 5 or more bedrooms. However, the Darlington mix requires a greater proportion of 4 bedroom homes and a lower proportion of smaller ones. This is due primarily to the differences in the existing stock of housing between Middleton St George and Darlington, presented in Table 6-4, with a notable lack of smaller homes in the NA compared with the wider Borough.

**Table 6-14: Size mix for Darlington 2011-2036**

Type	Number of bedrooms	Recommended split
Flat	1 bedroom	0.4%
	2+ bedrooms	3.7%
House	2 bedrooms	26.9%
	3 bedrooms	55.6%
	4 bedrooms	12.2%
	5+ bedrooms	1.2%

Source: SHMA Figure 52

## 6.5 Conclusions- Type and Size

192. Middleton St George's stock of existing housing is notably different to that of Darlington and England as a whole: it contains double the Borough's proportion of detached homes and a correspondingly high proportion of larger homes, as well as a much lower proportion of smaller homes.
193. Large properties also underwent the greatest growth between 2001 and 2011 in the NA, significantly outstripping growth in the larger categories for the wider geographies. However, growth in smaller properties was also significantly greater at NA level than seen across Darlington and England as a whole because of a generally higher rate of new building and population growth.
194. The age profile of Middleton St George's population is relatively similar to that seen at Borough and national levels. However, divergence does occur in the 45-64 category, where the NA has a notably higher proportion of such residents, who are likely to reach retirement age during the Plan period. There are also lower proportions of people ages 24 and under in Middleton St George. The main demographic challenge would therefore appear to be a deficit in the younger population, however other metrics indicate that younger age groups grew between the Censuses and the number of families with children is high and growing.
195. With regard to housing, it will be important to supply dwellings appropriate to young and newly forming households as well as older households who may seek to rightsize. The needs and financial capabilities of both these groups do overlap to some extent, although the precise configuration and quality expectations that they have for smaller dwellings may vary.
196. Middleton St George's demographic profile in 2036 is expected to be dominated by households aged 65 and over and those aged 35 to 54. Three-bedroom homes are particularly popular among both these dominant age bands, with the 35 to 59 group also likely to occupy larger dwellings and the 65 and over group expressing a strong preference for 2 bedroom homes.
197. Given the fact that Middleton St George's current dwelling stock is made up of significantly larger dwellings compared with Darlington, and that changes in the NA's population suggest the need for smaller dwellings, it is logical that the recommended dwelling mix for new development over the Plan period should prioritise the provision of 2 and 3 bedroom homes suitable to downsizers and young families.
198. In the Tenure and Affordability chapter analysis, it was found that market housing for purchase is increasingly unaffordable and that those on the lowest incomes are unable to afford to live outside of the social rented sector. While Affordable Housing should be well balanced in terms of size to cater for all circumstances, the provision of smaller homes for sale and rent, as advised here, should make an important contribution to improving affordability more widely. If older households wishing to rightsize and younger ones seeking to form their own independent households are to be able to afford to live in Middleton St George, increasing the provision of small and mid-size homes and, in so doing, rebalancing the housing stock away from very large housing, will be key.
199. In terms of the types of dwellings required, the current predominance of detached dwellings, compared with Borough and national trends, suggests that there may be some unmet demand for the rarer and generally more affordable dwelling types, such as terraced homes and flats. The size recommendation for smaller homes would align with this. This might also include the delivery of bungalows in order to meet the needs of some older households and to reflect the fact that other smaller dwelling types, such as apartments, may not in practice be popular market propositions in a rural area like Middleton St George.

## 7. Conclusions

### 7.1 Overview

200. Table 7-1 below sets out in full the conclusions and recommendations of this Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment, based on the evidence reviewed and analysed.

**Table 7-1: Summary of study findings specific to Middleton St George with a potential impact on Neighbourhood Plan housing policies**

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
Quantity of housing to plan for	<p>A Local Housing Need (LHN) Figure for Darlington Borough was calculated, using the Standard Method outlined in Planning Practice Guidance, to be 171 net additional dwellings per year.</p> <p>4.1% of Darlington Borough residents live in Middleton St George.</p> <p>According to the strategy for the pattern and scale of development across Darlington Borough outlined in the emerging Local Plan, 10.4% of housing growth should take place in Service Villages.</p> <p>The proportion of the total population of the Service Villages living in Middleton St George is 43.3%</p> <p>The adopted Core Strategy for Darlington Borough places strong emphasis on Darlington Town as the primary location for new residential development, although development is also supported in larger service villages including Middleton St George. The proportion of development to be distributed across different areas in the Borough is not given.</p> <p>No housing completions have been reported since the start of the Plan period as the Plan period begins in the year of writing.</p> <p>There are 654 valid planning commitments in Middleton St George.</p>	<p>Middleton St George's share of Darlington Borough's LHN is 8 dwellings per year, or 136 units over the Plan period 2019-2036, according to the strategy for the pattern and scale of development across the Borough outlined in the emerging Local Plan.</p> <p>Were this strategy not taken into account (i.e. were the adopted Core Strategy the only available planning document for the Borough), Middleton St George's housing needs figure (HNF) would be 7 dwellings per year, or 119 over the Plan period.</p> <p>These HNFs are both substantially lower than the 731 dwellings proposed to be allocated in the emerging Local Plan. This indicates that when the supply of available land and suitable sites is taken into account, Middleton St George could provide a greater share of housing growth in order to meet a share of the needs of the wider Borough.</p> <p>When the emerging Local Plan is adopted, either in its current form or revised in response to the consultation period, the housing requirement figure (HRF) or allocations provided, will supersede the provisional figure provided here.</p>

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
<p>Quantity of Affordable Housing to plan for</p>	<p>There are 12 households in priority bands 1-3 living in Middleton St George on the Darlington housing waiting list, as well as 32 overcrowded or concealed households at the time of the 2011 census.</p> <p>13 Affordable Housing units have been provided in Middleton St George since 2011, leaving total current (or backlog) need of 31 households.</p> <p>The estimated number of households expected to fall into need over the Plan period is 7.</p> <p>Total need for Affordable Housing to rent is estimated to be 38 households who need to be accommodated over the Plan period. This equates to approximately 2 Affordable Housing units required for each year of the Plan period.</p> <p>There is additional need (or potential demand) for affordable home ownership housing from households who can afford to rent but cannot afford to buy. AECOM estimate this equates to 128 households over the plan period (7.6 per annum). Their needs are less urgent and they do not lack housing; rather they would prefer to buy rather than rent.</p>	<p>If the 136 dwellings needed over the Plan period (see above) are delivered in compliance with the emerging Local Plan policy requiring 20% Affordable Housing on new development sites, 27 Affordable Housing units will be delivered.</p> <p>This total is likely to be lower since not all new sites will meet the 11-dwelling threshold at which this policy applies. It would also likely include the provision of subsidised ownership tenures, which fall outside of this calculation of need. In this case, it is recommended to increase the overall supply of housing in order to meet Affordable Housing need, or to plan for alternative measures such as exception sites.</p> <p>However, if the 721 dwellings allocated on sites providing more than 11 dwellings (of 731 in total) in the emerging Local Plan are brought forward, 146 Affordable Housing units will be delivered. It may also be the case that the Affordable Housing will be delivered in part outside of the NA, subject to ongoing discussions with DBC.</p>

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
Housing tenure and affordability	<p>Middleton St George is characterised by a high proportion of home ownership, as opposed to private and social renting.</p> <p>Lower quartile house prices have appreciated by 19% on average over the last ten years, and the income required to afford them is now 27% higher than the median household income and nearly three times higher than the lower quartile income among single-earning households.</p> <p>The rate of private renting increased by 250% (from a relatively low base) between 2001 and 2011, with households increasingly unable to afford home ownership turning instead to the next most affordable tenure.</p>	<p>The current tenure offering in Middleton St George is less diverse than the Borough and England, and should be made more diverse by the continued expansion of the private rented sector and an increase in provision of Affordable Housing.</p> <p>AECOM recommends that the NA retains the emerging Local Plan policy of seeking 79% affordable housing for rent and 21% for affordable home ownership in order to ensure delivery of affordable rented homes. In the event that a higher housing requirement is given to the NA, policy makers may wish to consider adjusting the tenure split. Shared ownership is recommended as the primary tenure for affordable home ownership as it has the potential to extend home ownership to more households.</p>
Housing type and size	<p>The stock of housing currently in Middleton St George contains twice the proportion of detached homes than Darlington Borough and a correspondingly high share of large homes.</p> <p>Large homes also represented a high proportion of the new housing supplied in the NA between 2001 and 2011.</p> <p>The demographic profile of Middleton St George at the end of the Plan period is projected to be dominated by households aged 65+ and 35-54, which tend to predominately occupy mid-sized dwellings.</p>	<p>Taking into account the current stock profile, which is skewed towards much larger homes, the dwelling size mix needed to serve the needs of the population at the end of the Plan period should prioritise the provision of 2 and 3 bedroom homes.</p> <p>The provision of smaller homes for sale and rent should also make an important contribution to improving the affordability challenges identified in the NA.</p> <p>In terms of dwelling type, a greater diversity of options should be promoted, meaning that terraced homes and flats (which are relatively rare) should form a greater proportion of the dwelling mix if possible. These also tend to be among the more affordable dwelling types.</p>

## 7.2 Recommendations for next steps

201. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide the Parish Council with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the Parish Council should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Darlington with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, bearing the following in mind:

- All Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, but in particular the following: Condition A, namely that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; Condition D, that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable

development; and Condition E, which is the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan;

- The views of Darlington – in particular in relation to the quantity of housing that should be planned for;
- The views of local residents;
- The views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers;
- The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by Darlington, including but not limited to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA);
- The recommendations and findings of this study; and
- The impact of the Government's Standard Methodology on calculating housing need for Darlington and the neighbourhood plan areas within it.

202. This assessment has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data, national guidance and other relevant and available information current at the time of writing.

203. Bearing this in mind, we recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan steering group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the Government, Darlington or any other relevant party and review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.

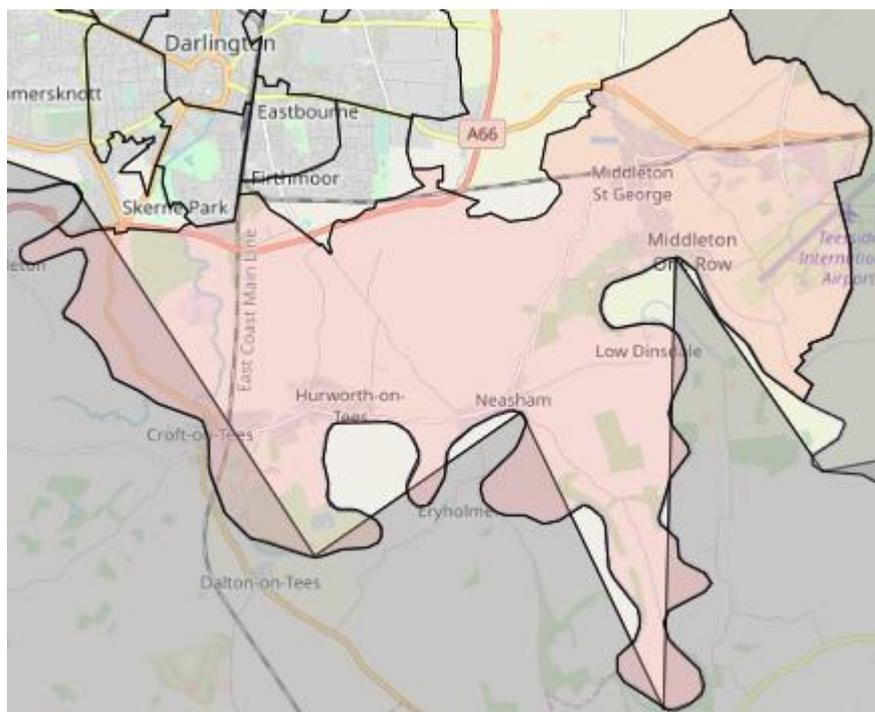
204. At the same time, monitoring on-going demographic or other trends over the Neighbourhood Plan period will help ensure the continued relevance and credibility of its policies.

## Appendix A : Calculation of Affordability Thresholds

### A.1 Assessment geography

205. As noted in the Tenure and Affordability chapter above, affordability thresholds should be calculated on the basis of income data that is available at MSOA level but not at the level of neighbourhood plan areas.
206. As such, an MSOA needs to be selected that is a best-fit proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the case of Middleton St George, it is considered that MSOA E02002573 is the closest realistic proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, and as such, this is the assessment geography that has been selected. A map of the MSOA appears below in Figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1: MSOA E02002573, used as a best-fit geographical proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: ONS

### A.2 Market housing

207. Market dwellings for sale and rent are increasingly accessible only to people on higher incomes. Choices in the housing market are driven principally by spending power, life stage, and personal taste.
208. The operation of the housing market is, in most circumstances, the best means of addressing the demand for different types of housing for sale. For this reason, it is important that planning policy does not place unnecessary burdens on the market that prevent its ability to respond to demand.
209. In this sense, the notion of development viability is essential. It is important not to deter development in the context of clear housing need; to do so will not only frustrate the delivery of new housing but also may deprive the community of resources for infrastructure improvements.
210. To determine affordability in market housing, we consider two primary indicators: income thresholds, which denote the maximum share of a family's income that should be spent on accommodation costs, and purchase thresholds, which denote the standard household income required to access mortgage products.

## i) Market sales

211. The starting point for calculating the affordability of a dwelling for sale (i.e. the purchase threshold) from the perspective of a specific household is the loan to income ratio which most mortgage companies are prepared to agree. This ratio is conservatively estimated to be 3.5.
212. To produce a more accurate assessment of affordability, both the savings available for a deposit and the equity in the home from which the buyer is moving (if not a first-time buyer) should be taken into account. However, this data is not available for Middleton St George. As such, a reasonable assumption is therefore made that a 10% purchase deposit is available to the prospective buyer.
213. The value of an entry-level dwelling is considered the best representation of the segment of market housing most likely to be accessible to those on lower incomes.<sup>28</sup> The value of an entry level dwelling used here is the lower quartile average house price from sales data from Land Registry over the year 2018.
214. The calculation is as follows:
- Value of an entry level dwelling = £155,000;
  - Purchase deposit = £15,500 @10% of value;
  - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £135,000;
  - Loan to income ratio = value of dwelling for mortgage purposes divided by 3.5;
  - **Purchase threshold = £39,857.**

## ii) Private Rented Sector (PRS)

215. Income thresholds are used to calculate the affordability of rented and affordable housing tenures. Households are deemed able to afford a private rent property if the lower quartile private rent does not exceed 25% of gross household income for households with incomes of less than £40,000 per annum, or 30% of gross household income for households with incomes of more than £40,000 per annum.
216. It is assumed that lower quartile private rent equates to the average rent paid in the Neighbourhood Plan area for a two-bedroom dwelling (enough living space for two or three individuals). In order to be in conformity with the Government guidance on overcrowding,<sup>29</sup> such a home would require three habitable rooms (a flat or house with two bedrooms).
217. The property website [Home.co.uk](http://Home.co.uk) shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The best available data is derived from properties available for rent within the DL2 postcode area, which covers a larger area than the Plan area itself but can be used as a reasonable proxy for it. Moreover, because it forms a larger geography with a greater number of rental properties offered, the larger sample size is likely to generate more robust findings.
218. According to [home.co.uk](http://home.co.uk), there are 3 two-bed properties currently listed for rent across DL2, with an average price of £491 per calendar month.
219. It is possible to derive from this data the estimated income threshold for private rental sector dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan area; the calculation is therefore:
- Annual rent = £491 x 12 = £5,888;
  - Multiplied by 4 (so that no more of 25% of income is spent on rent) = £23,552;
  - **Income threshold (private rental sector) = £23,552.**
220. The NPPF 2018 acknowledges that build-to-rent dwellings have a role to play in providing affordable market homes and may meet affordable housing need where they include a component of affordable private rent.

<sup>28</sup> 'Entry-level dwelling' can be understood to comprise a property that costs the average value of dwellings falling into the lower quartile of house prices in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as set out in the Tenure and Affordability chapter above.

<sup>29</sup> This is based on the concept of the 'room standard', which indicates a dwelling is legally overcrowded if two people of the opposite sex have to share a room to sleep in (this does not apply when couples share a room). See: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/repairs/overcrowding](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs/overcrowding)

## A.3 Affordable Housing

221. There are a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the 2019 NPPF: social rent and affordable rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership.
222. This variety of tenures reflects an ambition by the Government to provide a pathway to home ownership for more sectors of the population, as well as introducing market principles into the provision of subsidised housing for rent. The aim is to divide affordable housing into a series of products designed to appeal to different sectors of the market and, by changing eligibility criteria, bring rents closer in line with people's ability to pay.
223. We consider each of the affordable housing tenures in turn.

### i) Social rent

224. Rents in socially rented properties reflect a 'formula rent' based on a combination of individual property values and average earnings in each area, resulting in substantial discounts to market rents. As such, this tenure is suitable for the needs of those on low incomes and is subject to strict eligibility criteria.
225. To determine social rent levels, we used the data and statistical return from Homes England. This data is only available at the Local Authority level so must act as a proxy for Middleton St George. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and is presented for Darlington in the table below.
226. To determine the income needed, we continue to operate on the assumption that no more than 25% of income should be spent on rent.

**Table A-1: Social rent levels (£)**

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average social rent PCM	£67	£81	£85	£104	£80
Annual average	£3,459	£4,233	£4,411	£5,413	£4,186
Income needed	£13,834	£16,931	£17,643	£21,651	£16,743

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

### ii) Affordable rent

227. Affordable rent is controlled at no more than 80% of the local market rent. As we have seen, the annual entry-level rent in Middleton St George is £5,888. In the event of a 20% reduction in rent to £4,710, the income threshold would reduce to an estimated £18,842. This tenure is usually only accessible to those on local authority and housing association waiting lists.
228. Although affordable rent at 80% of market rent is permitted, in practice most registered providers seek to cap rents so that they are affordable to those on universal credit, which is the group of people who will be accessing this tenure. This may be done by determining a percentage of the maximum benefit available to a household that should be spent on housing costs: for example, it might be set at 40% of the maximum universal credit amount of £20,000, meaning that affordable rent for larger homes for families would be capped at £8,000 per year.

### iii) Intermediate tenures

229. Intermediate housing includes homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels, subject to the criteria in the affordable housing definition above. They can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

230. In paragraph 64 of the NPPF 2019, the Government introduces a recommendation that “*where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership*”.

### **Starter homes**

231. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a duty on planning authorities in England to promote the supply of ‘starter homes’, and to require a minimum number or proportion of ‘starter homes’ on certain residential development sites.

232. A starter home is a new build home with a discounted value not exceeding £250,000 (or £450,000 in London); they are eligible for first time buyers aged 40 or younger.

233. Whether to treat discounted market sale homes as affordable housing or not depends on whether lowering the asking price of new build homes of a size and type suitable to first time buyers by 20% would bring them within reach of people currently unable to access market housing for purchase.

234. To provide a conservative assessment of the suitability of discounted market sale homes, it is appropriate to apply the value we have estimated for an entry-level dwelling, namely £155,000.

235. Applying a discount of 20% provides an approximate selling price of £124,000. Allowing for a 10% deposit further reduces the value of the property to £111,600. The income threshold at a loan to income ratio of 3.5 is £31,886.

236. However, this method of estimating the cost of Starter Homes is based on an assumption that they will be priced with reference to the value of lower quartile dwellings, with a discount of 20% applied. In practice, there is nothing in national regulations to require that their price is set in this way. Developers could instead set prices with reference to average new build prices or a market value they establish themselves based on their sales prices in the area, both of which tend to be much higher than lower quartile prices. This ambiguity means that the cost of Starter Homes can in reality be much higher than the optimistic calculation presented here.

### **Shared ownership**

237. Shared ownership involves the purchaser buying an initial share in a property typically of between 25% and 75% and paying rent on the share retained by the provider. Shared ownership is flexible in two respects, in the share which can be purchased and in the rental payable on the share retained by the provider. Both of these are variable. The share owned by the leaseholder can be varied by ‘staircasing’. Generally, staircasing will be upward, thereby increasing the share owned over time.

238. In exceptional circumstances (for example, as a result of financial difficulties, and where the alternative is repossession), and at the discretion of the provider, shared owners may staircase down, thereby reducing the share they own. Shared equity is available to first-time buyers, people who have owned a home previously and council and housing association tenants with a good credit rating whose annual household income does not exceed £80,000.

239. To determine the affordability of shared ownership, calculations are based on the lower quartile house price of £155,000.<sup>30</sup> The deposit available to the prospective purchaser is assumed to be 10% of the value of the dwelling, and the standard loan to value ratio of 3.5 is used to calculate the income required to obtain a mortgage. The income required to cover the rental component of the dwelling is based on the assumption that a household spends no more than 25% of income on rent (as for the income threshold for the private rental sector).

240. A 25% equity share of £155,000 is £38,750, from which a 10% deposit of £3,875 is deducted. The mortgage value of £34,875 (£38,750 - £3,875) is then divided by 3.5. To secure a mortgage of £34,875, an annual income of £9,964 is therefore needed. In addition to mortgage costs, rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £116,250. An ongoing annual rent equivalent to 2.5% of the value of the unsold equity is assumed, which is £2,906 and requires an income of £11,625. Therefore, an income of around £21,589 (£9,964 + £11,625) is required to afford a 25% shared equity purchase of an entry-level house with annual rent.

241. The same calculations are repeated for shared ownership at a 50% and 75% equity share, producing affordability thresholds of £27,679 and £33,768 respectively.

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<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that this is based on new build sales only. The current shared ownership models are only available for new build homes, with the assumed cost therefore differing from the cost of open market housing, which also includes property re-sale.

## Appendix B : Housing Needs Assessment Glossary

### Adoption

This refers to the final confirmation of a local plan by a local planning authority.

### Affordability

The terms 'affordability' and 'affordable housing' have different meanings. 'Affordability' is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. 'Affordable housing' refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

### Affordability Ratio

Assessing affordability involves comparing house costs against the ability to pay. The ratio between lower quartile house prices and the lower quartile income or earnings can be used to assess the relative affordability of housing. The Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Governments publishes quarterly the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local authority (LQAR) as well as median house price to median earnings by local authority (MAR) e.g. income = £25,000, house price = £200,000. House price: income ratio =  $\frac{£200,000}{£25,000} = 8$ , (the house price is 8 times income).

### Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

### Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). The national rent regime is the regime under which the social rents of tenants of social housing are set, with particular reference to the Guide to Social Rent Reforms

(March 2001) and the Rent Influencing Regime Guidance (October 2001). Local market rents are calculated using the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) approved valuation methods<sup>31</sup>.

### **Age-Restricted General Market Housing**

A type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.

### **Annual Monitoring Report**

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

### **Basic Conditions**

The Basic Conditions are the legal tests that are considered at the examination stage of neighbourhood development plans. They need to be met before a plan can progress to referendum.

### **Backlog need**

The backlog need constitutes those households who are eligible for Affordable Housing, on account of homelessness, overcrowding, concealment or affordability, but who are yet to be offered a home suited to their needs.

### **Bedroom Standard<sup>32</sup>**

The bedroom standard is a measure of occupancy (whether a property is overcrowded or under-occupied, based on the number of bedrooms in a property and the type of household in residence). The Census overcrowding data is based on occupancy rating (overcrowding by number of rooms not including bathrooms and hallways). This tends to produce higher levels of overcrowding/ under occupation. A detailed definition of the standard is given in the Glossary of the EHS Household Report.

### **Co-living**

Co-living denotes people who do not have family ties sharing either a self-contained dwelling (i.e., a 'house share') or new development akin to student housing in which people have a bedroom and bathroom to themselves, but share living and kitchen space with others. In co-living schemes each individual represents a separate 'household'.

### **Community Led Housing/Community Land Trusts**

Housing development, provision and management that is led by the community is very often driven by a need to secure affordable housing for local people in the belief that housing that comes through the planning system may be neither the right tenure or price-point to be attractive or affordable to local people. The principle forms of community-led models include cooperatives, co-housing communities, self-help housing, community self-build housing, collective custom-build housing, and community land trusts. By bringing forward development which is owned by the community, the community is able to set rents and/or mortgage payments at a rate that it feels is appropriate. The Government has a range of support programmes for people interested in bringing forward community led housing.

### **Community Right to Build Order<sup>33</sup>**

A community right to build order is a special kind of neighbourhood development order, granting planning permission for small community development schemes, such as housing or new community facilities. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare community right to build orders.

### **Concealed Families (Census definition)<sup>34</sup>**

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<sup>31</sup> The Tenant Services Authority has issued an explanatory note on these methods at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1918430.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report>

<sup>33</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

<sup>34</sup> See [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_350282.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_350282.pdf)

The 2011 Census defined a concealed family as one with young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents, older couples living with an adult child and their family or unrelated families sharing a household. A single person cannot be a concealed family; therefore one elderly parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family; the latter are reported in an ONS analysis on increasing numbers of young adults living with parents.

### **Equity Loans/Shared Equity**

An equity loan which acts as a second charge on a property. For example, a household buys a £200,000 property with a 10% equity loan (£20,000). They pay a small amount for the loan and when the property is sold e.g. for £250,000 the lender receives 10% of the sale cost (£25,000). Some equity loans were available for the purchase of existing stock. The current scheme is to assist people to buy new build.

### **Extra Care Housing or Housing-With-Care**

Housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

### **Fair Share**

'Fair share' is an approach to determining housing need within a given geographical area based on a proportional split according to the size of the area, the number of homes in it, or its population.

### **Habitable Rooms**

The number of habitable rooms in a home is the total number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets and halls.

### **Household Reference Person (HRP)**

The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the head of the household. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

### **Housing Market Area**

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate.

### **Housing Needs**

There is no official definition of housing need in either the National Planning Policy Framework or the National Planning Practice Guidance. Clearly, individuals have their own housing needs. The process of understanding housing needs at a population scale is undertaken via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see below).

### **Housing Needs Assessment**

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is an assessment of housing needs at the Neighbourhood Area level.

### **Housing Products**

Housing products simply refers to different types of housing as they are produced by developers of various kinds (including councils and housing associations). Housing products usually refers to specific tenures and types of new build housing, such as Starter Homes, the Government's flagship 'housing product'.

### **Housing Size (Census Definition)**

Housing size can be referred to either in terms of the number of bedrooms in a home (a bedroom is defined as any room that was intended to be used as a bedroom when the property was built, any rooms permanently converted for use as bedrooms); or in terms of the number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between more than one household, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

### **Housing Type (Census Definition)**

This refers to the type of accommodation used or available for use by an individual household (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced including end of terraced, and flats). Flats are broken down into those in a purpose-built block of flats, in parts of a converted or shared house, or in a commercial building.

### **Housing Tenure (Census Definition)**

Tenure provides information about whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, combines this with information about the type of landlord who owns or manages the accommodation.

### **Income Threshold**

Income thresholds are derived as a result of the annualisation of the monthly rental cost and then asserting this cost should not exceed 35% of annual household income.

### **Intercensal Period**

This means the period between the last two Censuses, i.e. between years 2001 and 2011.

### **Intermediate Housing**

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low-cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

### **Life Stage modelling**

Life Stage modelling is forecasting need for dwellings of different sizes by the end of the Plan period on the basis of changes in the distribution of household types and key age brackets (life stages) within the NA. Given the shared behavioural patterns associated with these metrics, they provide a helpful way of understanding and predicting future community need. This data is not available at neighbourhood level so LPA level data is employed on the basis of the NA falling within its defined Housing Market Area.

### **Life-time Homes**

Dwellings constructed to make them more flexible, convenient adaptable and accessible than most 'normal' houses, usually according to the Lifetime Homes Standard, 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost: <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>.

### **Life-time Neighbourhoods**

Lifetime neighbourhoods extend the principles of Lifetime Homes into the wider neighbourhood to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way to be as inclusive as possible and designed to address the needs of older people, for example providing more greenery and more walkable, better connected places.

### **Local Development Order**

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

### **Local Enterprise Partnership**

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

### **Local housing need (NPPF definition)**

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

### **Local Planning Authority**

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the District Council, London Borough Council, County Council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority or the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

### **Local Plan**

This is the plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies form part of the Local Plan and are known as 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs).

### **Lower Quartile**

The bottom 25% value, i.e. of all the properties sold, 25% were cheaper than this value and 75% were more expensive. The lower quartile price is used as an entry level price and is the recommended level used to evaluate affordability; for example for first time buyers.

### **Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio**

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Lower Quartile Household Incomes and Lower Quartile House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on relatively low incomes.

### **Market Housing**

Market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.

### **Mean (Average)**

The mean or the average is, mathematically, the sum of all values divided by the total number of values. This is the more commonly used "average" measure as it includes all values, unlike the median.

### **Median**

The middle value, i.e. of all the properties sold, half were cheaper and half were more expensive. This is sometimes used instead of the mean average as it is not subject to skew by very large or very small statistical outliers.

### **Median Affordability Ratio**

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Median Household Incomes and Median House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on middle-range incomes.

### **Mortgage Ratio**

The mortgage ratio is the ratio of mortgage value to income which is typically deemed acceptable by banks. Approximately 75% of all mortgage lending ratios fell below 4 in recent years<sup>35</sup>, i.e. the total value of the mortgage was less than 4 times the annual income of the person who was granted the mortgage.

### **Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)**

An NDO will grant planning permission for a particular type of development in a particular area. This could be either a particular development, or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). A number of types of development will be excluded from NDOs, however. These are minerals and waste development, types of development that, regardless of scale, always need Environmental Impact Assessment, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

### **Neighbourhood plan**

A plan prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

### **Older People**

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

### **Output Area/Lower Super Output Area/Middle Super Output Area**

An output area is the lowest level of geography for publishing statistics, and is the core geography from which statistics for other geographies are built. Output areas were created for England and Wales from the 2001 Census data, by grouping a number of households and populations together so that each output area's population is roughly the same. 175,434 output areas were created from the 2001 Census data, each containing a minimum of 100 persons with an average of 300 persons. Lower Super Output Areas consist of higher geographies of between 1,000-1,500 persons (made up of a number of individual Output Areas) and Middle Super Output Areas are higher than this, containing between 5,000 and 7,200 people, and made up of individual Lower Layer Super Output Areas. Some statistics are only available down to Middle Layer Super Output Area level, meaning that they are not available for individual Output Areas or parishes.

### **Overcrowding**

There is no single agreed definition of overcrowding, however, utilising the Government's bedroom standard, overcrowding is deemed to be in households where there is more than one person in the household per room (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, halls and storage areas). As such, a home with one bedroom and one living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

### **Planning Condition**

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

### **Planning Obligation**

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

### **Purchase Threshold**

Purchase thresholds are calculated by netting 10% off the entry house price to reflect purchase deposit. The resulting cost is divided by 4 to reflect the standard household income requirement to access mortgage products.

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<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/>

## **Proportionate and Robust Evidence**

Proportionate and robust evidence is evidence which is deemed appropriate in scale, scope and depth for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, sufficient so as to meet the Basic Conditions, as well as robust enough to withstand legal challenge. It is referred to a number of times in the PPG and its definition and interpretation relies on the judgement of professionals such as Neighbourhood Plan Examiners.

## **Private Rented**

The Census tenure private rented includes a range of different living situations in practice, such as private rented/ other including households living "rent free". Around 20% of the private rented sector are in this category, which will have included some benefit claimants whose housing benefit at the time was paid directly to their landlord. This could mean people whose rent is paid by their employer, including some people in the armed forces. Some housing association tenants may also have been counted as living in the private rented sector because of confusion about what a housing association is.

## **Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing**

Housing for older people which usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

## **Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes**

Housing for older people comprising of individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

## **Rural Exception Sites**

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable dwellings without grant funding.

## **Shared Ownership**

Housing where a purchaser part buys and part rents from a housing association or local authority. Typical purchase share is between 25% and 75%, and buyers are encouraged to buy the largest share they can afford. Generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available. There may be an opportunity to rent at intermediate rent level before purchasing a share in order to save/increase the deposit level

## **Sheltered Housing<sup>36</sup>**

Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bedroomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden.

## **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

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<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the Plan period. SHLAAs are sometimes also called LAAs (Land Availability Assessments) or HELAAs (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments) so as to integrate the need to balance assessed housing and economic needs as described below.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPPF Definition)**

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to assess their housing needs under the 2012 version of the NPPF, usually across administrative boundaries to encompass the whole housing market area. The NPPF makes clear that SHMAs should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need over the Plan period. Sometimes SHMAs are combined with Economic Development Needs Assessments to create documents known as HEDNAs (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments).

### **Specialist Housing for the Elderly**

Specialist housing for the elderly, sometimes known as specialist accommodation for the elderly, encompasses a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (usually 55+ or 65+). This could include residential institutions, sometimes known as care homes, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services. This housing can be provided in a range of tenures (often on a rented or leasehold basis).

### **Social Rented Housing**

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing>





Middleton St George Parish Council

Middleton St George

Traffic Survey

Station Rd

March – April 2019

## Background

The Parish Council of Middleton St George own a traffic monitor system which uses Houston Radar to measure speed of oncoming traffic and to measure volumes of vehicles passing the monitor.

The system is marketed in the UK by Unipart Dorman and the model we possess is the DF11.

We normally use the unit to measure speeds of traffic on one of three locations in the village.

- a) Yarm Rd (30mph)
- b) Middleton Lane (30mph)
- c) Station Rd (40mph approaching 30mph)

We are able to re-locate the portable unit to other areas of the village and secure it to poles/lampposts to monitor traffic.

The system is battery powered and needs to be recharged about every 2 weeks. The data from the unit can be downloaded using Bluetooth Technology to a receptive computer near to the unit.

Once the data is captured it can be analysed using Houston Radar Stats analysis software and tables and graphs can be produced showing speeds of vehicles or vehicle counts.

## The Purpose of this survey

There has been some concern over the volume of traffic travelling along Station Rd towards the village and away from the village towards Darlington

To try and analyse these traffic movements a survey was conducted in March and April of 2019.

Firstly the Unit was positioned on Station Rd and traffic was monitored from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March until Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

The Unit was repositioned on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

The data captured was analysed and tables and graphs produced

## The First Analysis on Station Rd

Firstly counts were taken for each week :

Hour	Monday 18/03/2019	Tuesday 19/03/2019	Wednesday 20/03/2019	Thursday 21/03/2019	Friday 22/03/2019	Saturday 23/03/2019	Sunday 24/03/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	0	7	6	8	5	17	19	6.5	18	41.9
1-2	0	0	4	4	1	7	9	2.3	8	38.3
2-3	0	3	3	2	2	8	7	2.5	7.5	37.5
3-4	0	5	1	3	1	7	4	2.5	5.5	41.3
4-5	0	3	3	3	4	3	2	3.3	2.5	42.5
5-6	0	4	8	6	15	5	0	8.3	2.5	41.7
6-7	0	34	35	38	25	9	10	33	9.5	41.1
7-8	0	67	71	68	71	32	16	69.3	24	39.5
8-9	0	93	115	105	104	75	43	104.3	59	38.9
9-10	0	94	118	101	90	118	61	100.8	89.5	39
10-11	0	121	131	137	134	164	134	130.8	149	38.9
11-12	0	121	118	113	135	190	159	121.8	174.5	39.3
12-13	95	144	150	145	153	194	180	137.4	187	39.4
13-14	124	136	139	117	147	181	141	133.2	161	39.7
14-15	145	140	143	150	186	163	150	152.8	156.5	39.6
15-16	187	198	193	191	205	164	171	194.8	167.5	39.4
16-17	193	218	179	209	205	133	133	200.8	133	40.1
17-18	229	232	225	205	209	166	103	220	134.5	39.7
18-19	197	164	200	199	164	157	90	184.8	123.5	39
19-20	128	169	150	161	141	95	60	149.8	77.5	39.1
20-21	84	84	93	125	86	94	61	94.4	77.5	40
21-22	96	62	53	52	68	43	37	58.2	40	41.6
22-23	36	22	37	36	40	48	25	34.2	36.5	41.1
23-24	19	19	20	22	41	32	13	34.2	22.5	41.2
Totals	1493	2143	2195	2200	2232	2105	1628			
% of Total	10.7%	15.3%	15.7%	15.7%	15.9%	15%	11.6%			

Hour	Monday 25/03/2019	Tuesday 26/03/2019	Wednesday 27/03/2019	Thursday 28/03/2019	Friday 29/03/2019	Saturday 30/03/2019	Sunday 31/03/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	4	5	5	9	10	24	24	6.6	24	39
1-2	0	2	1	3	2	15	10	1.6	12.5	40
2-3	4	0	3	5	1	4	5	2.6	4.5	40.6
3-4	3	1	2	1	2	2	4	1.8	3	42
4-5	2	2	3	0	2	3	6	1.8	4.5	41.3
5-6	9	10	10	8	13	10	7	10	8.5	40.3
6-7	24	25	26	31	28	16	22	26.8	19	41.9
7-8	63	70	65	65	63	26	27	65.2	26.5	40.1
8-9	83	86	90	104	106	74	50	93.8	62	39.1
9-10	124	81	123	118	117	128	111	112.6	119.5	39.6
10-11	133	118	147	111	180	173	156	137.8	164.5	39.2
11-12	129	151	126	134	158	193	182	139.6	187.5	39.2
12-13	161	153	150	149	155	208	180	153.6	194	39.6
13-14	153	187	138	139	167	195	143	140.8	169	39.6
14-15	151	166	151	162	199	160	199	155.8	179.5	39.4
15-16	188	198	173	199	221	175	125	195.8	150.5	39.9
16-17	190	187	200	190	221	201	119	197.5	160	40.1
17-18	222	212	236	200	206	184	124	215.2	154	40.2
18-19	166	217	213	162	186	135	87	188.8	111	39.1
19-20	140	154	158	151	170	101	70	154.6	85.5	39.1
20-21	78	72	93	98	90	64	40	86.2	52	39.6
21-22	54	55	55	69	73	45	28	61.2	36.5	41.8
22-23	24	30	43	24	54	43	14	35	28.5	41.3
23-24	18	26	22	24	37	34	5	25.4	19.5	40.8
Totals	2123	2128	2233	2156	2461	2214	1738			
% of Total	14.1%	14.1%	14.8%	14.3%	16.3%	14.7%	11.5%			

Hour	Monday 01/04/2019	Tuesday 02/04/2019	Wednesday 03/04/2019	Thursday 04/04/2019	Friday 05/04/2019	Saturday 06/04/2019	Sunday 07/04/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	0	1	4	1	*	*	*	1.5	*	36.1
1-2	1	1	0	1	*	*	*	0.8	*	36.7
2-3	0	0	1	2	*	*	*	0.8	*	40
3-4	1	154	4	3	*	*	*	40.5	*	27.3
4-5	6	44	8	4	*	*	*	15.5	*	31.9
5-6	24	26	16	24	*	*	*	22.5	*	38.4
6-7	54	73	89	66	*	*	*	70.5	*	39
7-8	82	97	200	108	*	*	*	121.8	*	37.3
8-9	120	100	115	114	*	*	*	112.3	*	39.1
9-10	123	106	109	111	*	*	*	112.3	*	38.8
10-11	137	100	114	106	*	*	*	114.3	*	39.4
11-12	145	147	148	143	*	*	*	145.8	*	39.4
12-13	141	128	122	127	*	*	*	129.5	*	39.5
13-14	149	220	159	123	*	*	*	162.8	*	39
14-15	208	186	190	*	*	*	*	154.7	*	39.7
15-16	190	186	183	*	*	*	*	186.3	*	40.9
16-17	265	228	252	*	*	*	*	248.3	*	39.3
17-18	164	210	183	*	*	*	*	185.7	*	40.1
18-19	155	127	141	*	*	*	*	141	*	39.4
19-20	76	130	77	*	*	*	*	94.3	*	39
20-21	52	67	47	*	*	*	*	55.3	*	39.3
21-22	31	32	34	*	*	*	*	32.3	*	39.9
22-23	11	16	22	*	*	*	*	16.3	*	41
23-24	7	4	10	*	*	*	*	7	*	39.7
Totals	2142	2383	2228	933	0	0	0			
% of Total	27.9%	31%	29%	12.1%	0%	0%	0%			

These totals were then summed.

Week 1 18/03/2019 to 24/03/2019.                      13996 vehicles  
 Week 2 25/03/2019 to 31/03/2019                      15053 vehicles  
 Week 3 01/04/2019 to 04/04/2019                      7746 vehicles

Total vehicle movements between Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March until Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019...36735

**TRAFFIC ANALYSIS REPORT**

For Project:	StationRD									
Location/Name:	Incoming Direction									
Report Generated:	07/04/2019 14:52									
Speed Intervals	5 mph									
Time Intervals	5 minutes									
Traffic Report From	3/18/2019 12:25:00 PM through 4/14/2019 9:00:00 AM									
85th Percentile Speed	39.5 mph									
85th Percentile Vehicles	31,225 counts									
Max Speed	70.0 mph on 3/27/2019 4:45:00 PM									
Total Vehicles	36,735 count									
AADT:	1,368									
<b>Volumes - weekly vehicle counts</b>										
	<b>Time</b>	<b>5 Day</b>	<b>7 Day</b>							
Average Daily		2,092	1,963							
AM peak	10:00 to 11:00	127	134							
PM peak	5:00 to 6:00	211	193							
<b>Speed</b>										
Speed limit:		35 mph								
85th Percentile Speed:		39.5 mph								
Average Speed:		33.3 mph								
		<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>		
Count over limit		2,860	2,942	3,033	2,524	2,292	2,063	1,692		
% over limit		49.7	44.2	45.6	47.7	48.8	47.8	50.2		
Avg speeder		38.9	38.9	38.9	39.0	39.0	39.0	39.0		

# Summarised weekly by average over hourly periods

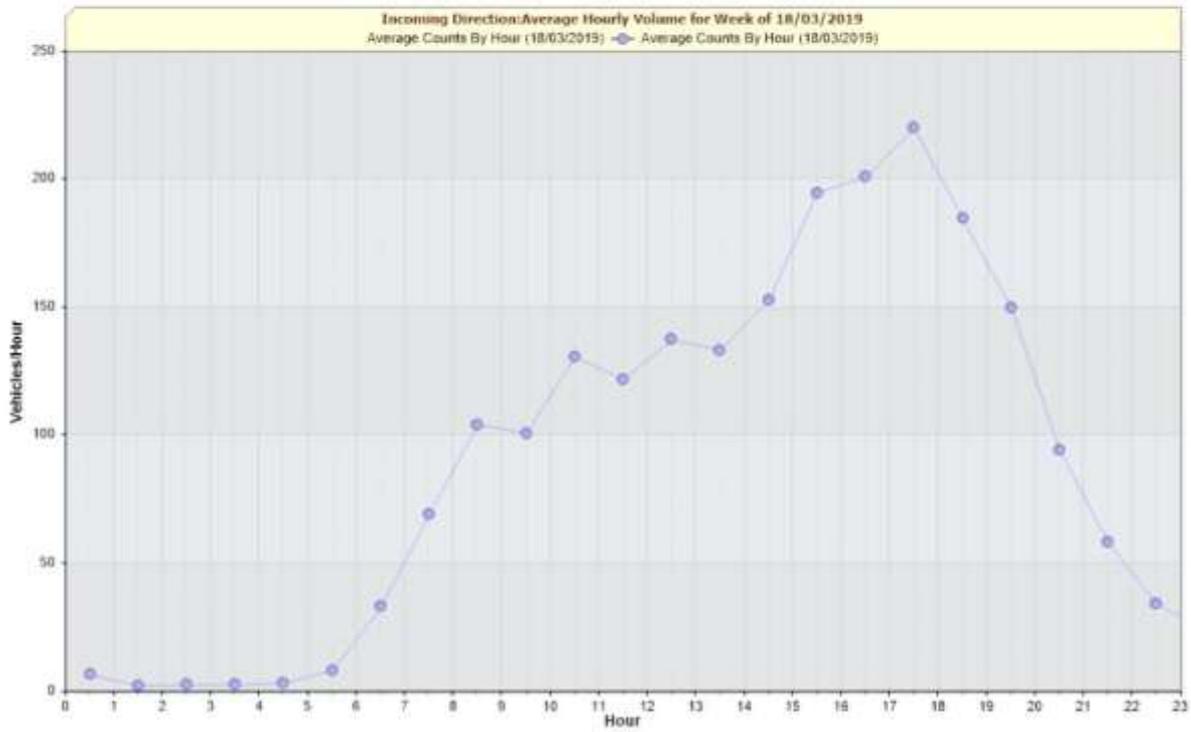
Project: StationRD  
 Location: Incoming Direction

Enable Comparisons:

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019

Select Week (Starting Monday):

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019



Analysis Report | Monthly Counts/Speed Avgs | Weekly Counts/Speed Averages | Charts: Average Weekly Speeds | Charts: Average Weekly Volumes | Charts: Daily Volumes

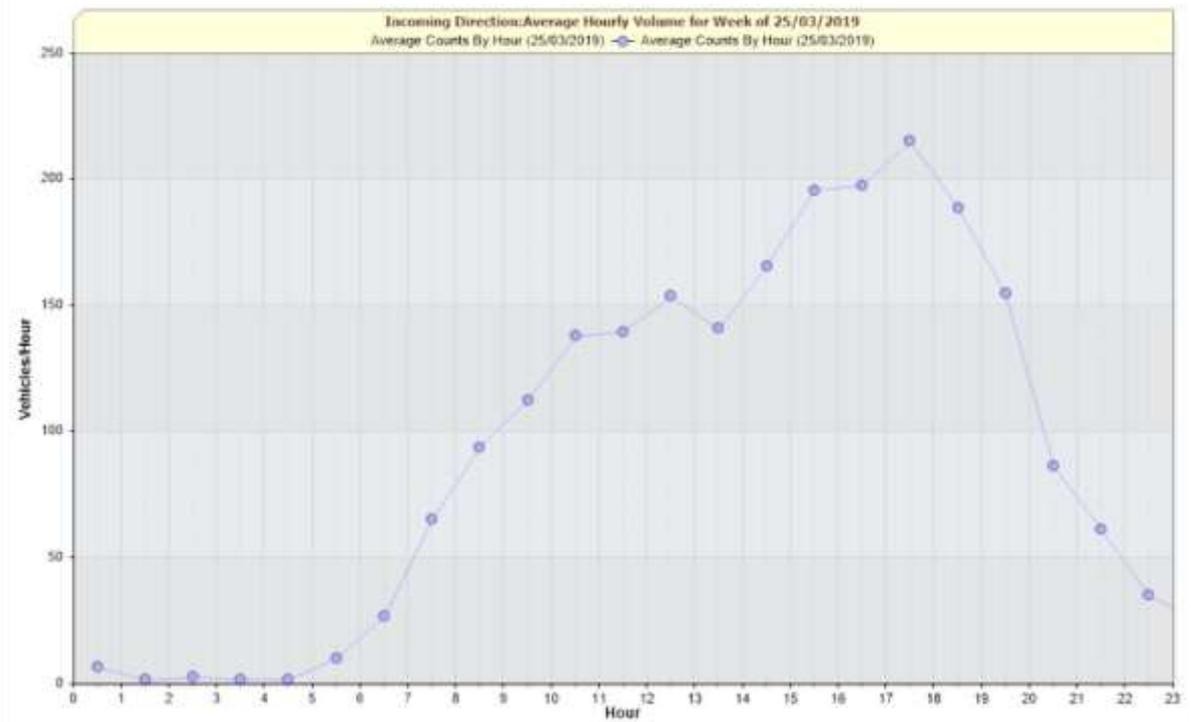
Project: StationRD  
 Location: Incoming Direction

Enable Comparisons:

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019

Select Week (Starting Monday):

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019



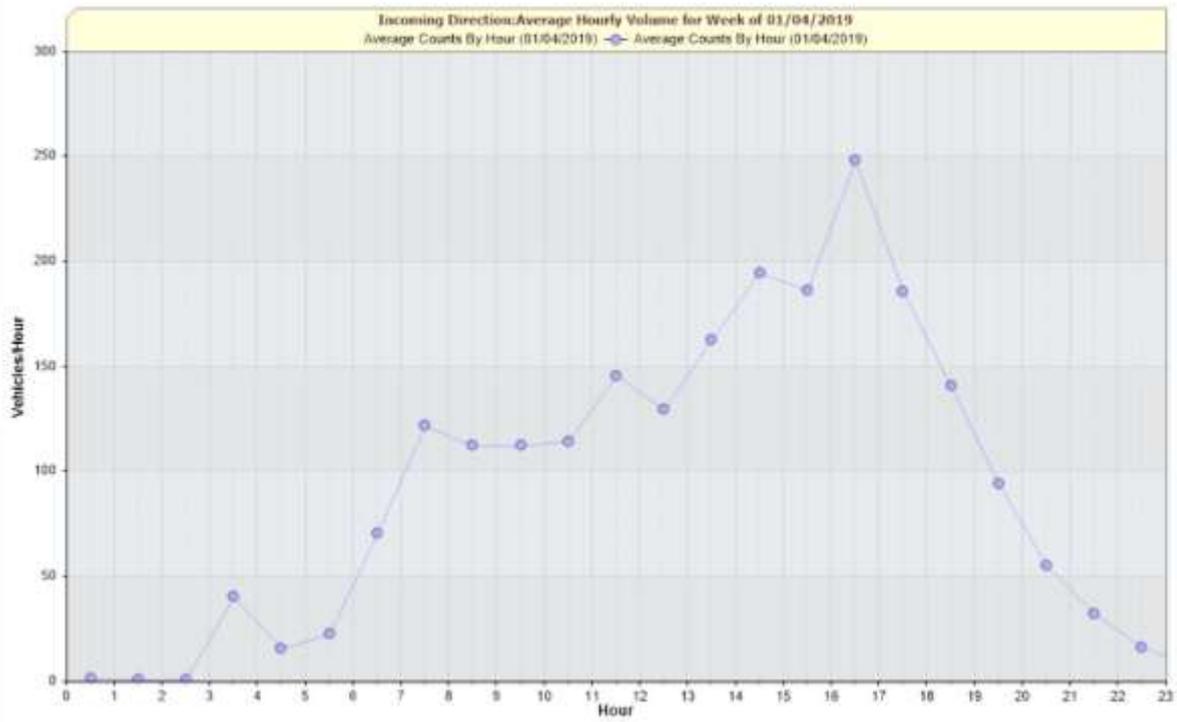
Project: StationRD  
 Location: Incoming Direction

Enable Comparisons:

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019

Select Week (Starting Monday):

- 18/03/2019
- 25/03/2019
- 01/04/2019
- 08/04/2019



The Second Analysis on Station Rd.

Firstly counts were taken for each week :

Hour	Monday 15/04/2019	Tuesday 16/04/2019	Wednesday 17/04/2019	Thursday 18/04/2019	Friday 19/04/2019	Saturday 20/04/2019	Sunday 21/04/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	*	*	10	12	17	10	18	13	14	41.3
1-2	*	*	1	2	11	6	12	4.7	9	39.2
2-3	*	*	3	2	8	12	8	4.3	10	39.2
3-4	*	*	1	1	4	6	6	2	6	37.9
4-5	*	*	3	3	1	2	2	2.3	2	41.7
5-6	*	*	4	6	3	3	2	4.3	2.5	38.8
6-7	*	*	24	22	13	7	4	19.7	5.5	41.5
7-8	*	*	41	42	31	20	15	38	17.5	41.2
8-9	*	*	66	68	38	48	27	57.3	38	42.1
9-10	*	*	95	99	75	94	40	89.7	67	39.7
10-11	*	*	124	129	122	151	111	125	131	38.8
11-12	*	*	127	147	148	153	126	140.7	139.5	39.2
12-13	*	164	153	171	148	199	150	159	174.5	39.3
13-14	*	136	143	159	170	174	116	152.8	145	39.6
14-15	*	160	144	177	159	159	119	160	139	39.3
15-16	*	157	168	180	161	164	92	166.5	128	40.1
16-17	*	185	177	228	151	137	85	185.3	111	39.7
17-18	*	183	218	180	149	171	69	182.5	120	40.1
18-19	*	187	201	170	136	122	81	173.5	101.5	40.7
19-20	*	141	147	166	121	103	91	143.8	97	39.3
20-21	*	94	95	137	81	79	78	101.8	78.5	39.5
21-22	*	65	76	82	62	62	98	71.3	60	40
22-23	*	48	36	43	37	38	28	41	33	40.8
23-24	*	24	29	32	25	32	22	27.5	27	40.7
Totals	0	1547	2086	2258	1871	1953	1360			
% of Total	0%	14%	18.8%	20.4%	16.9%	17.6%	12.3%			

Hour	Monday 22/04/2019	Tuesday 23/04/2019	Wednesday 24/04/2019	Thursday 25/04/2019	Friday 26/04/2019	Saturday 27/04/2019	Sunday 28/04/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	9	7	6	3	8	23	18	6.6	20.5	44.4
1-2	3	1	4	0	2	10	11	2	10.5	41.3
2-3	7	2	1	0	1	3	5	2.2	4	43.1
3-4	4	0	2	0	1	3	3	1.4	3	35
4-5	4	0	1	1	0	2	7	1.2	4.5	42.5
5-6	4	4	4	6	8	5	3	5.2	4	38.7
6-7	8	21	23	21	22	9	7	19	8	42
7-8	14	49	63	58	62	21	18	49.2	19.5	39.9
8-9	25	82	101	87	90	40	24	77	32	39.7
9-10	85	111	132	123	111	87	55	112.4	71	39.5
10-11	136	154	124	131	121	140	87	133.2	113.5	38.9
11-12	157	116	136	133	132	169	135	134.8	152	39.1
12-13	184	161	158	127	160	193	174	158	183.5	39.9
13-14	156	175	128	143	143	167	189	149	178	39.3
14-15	165	165	163	152	131	196	147	155.4	171.5	39.4
15-16	181	191	194	215	202	167	138	196.6	152.5	39.1
16-17	141	184	188	181	176	147	138	174	142.5	39.9
17-18	124	209	196	194	194	163	109	183.4	136	40
18-19	132	204	219	192	208	129	93	191	111	39.7
19-20	96	168	163	177	191	168	104	159	136.5	39.7
20-21	61	102	99	87	97	97	63	89.2	80	40.5
21-22	44	72	24	78	74	61	36	58.4	48.5	39.9
22-23	26	36	18	42	60	44	26	36.4	35	39.1
23-24	12	18	6	21	33	32	17	18	24.5	41.7
Totals	1775	2232	2153	2172	2227	2077	1607			
% of Total	12.5%	15.7%	15.1%	15.2%	15.6%	14.6%	11.3%			

Hour	Monday 29/04/2019	Tuesday 30/04/2019	Wednesday 01/05/2019	Thursday 02/05/2019	Friday 03/05/2019	Saturday 04/05/2019	Sunday 05/05/2019	Week Day Avg	Weekend Avg	Week Day 85% Avg Speed
0-1	5	10	7	15	12	0	0	5.8	0	42.8
1-2	1	4	1	3	6	0	0	3	0	39.7
2-3	4	1	2	3	4	0	0	2.8	0	41
3-4	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	1.2	0	37.5
4-5	2	0	1	3	5	0	0	2.2	0	31.9
5-6	7	4	6	9	4	0	0	6	0	37.8
6-7	19	28	14	20	20	0	0	20.2	0	39.5
7-8	57	62	63	70	19	0	0	54.2	0	40.2
8-9	89	89	82	95	0	0	0	71	0	38.9
9-10	112	122	106	120	0	0	0	92	0	38.8
10-11	104	92	118	122	0	0	0	87.2	0	39
11-12	144	99	114	118	0	0	0	95	0	39.3
12-13	162	131	139	147	0	0	0	115.8	0	39.5
13-14	129	148	136	133	0	0	0	109.2	0	39.4
14-15	146	142	148	163	0	0	0	117.8	0	39.5
15-16	206	179	191	172	0	0	0	149.6	0	39.2
16-17	173	182	188	186	0	0	0	145.8	0	39.6
17-18	212	216	226	216	0	0	0	174	0	39.9
18-19	195	204	214	232	0	0	0	169	0	39.7
19-20	136	165	156	173	0	0	0	126	0	40
20-21	112	125	105	112	0	0	0	90.8	0	39.4
21-22	58	71	69	72	0	0	0	54	0	40.2
22-23	42	45	41	34	0	0	0	32.4	0	39.4
23-24	14	14	34	24	0	0	0	17.2	0	41.8
Totals	2129	2135	2161	2232	74	0	0			
% of Total	24.4%	24.5%	24.8%	26.6%	0.8%	0%	0%			

These totals were then summed.

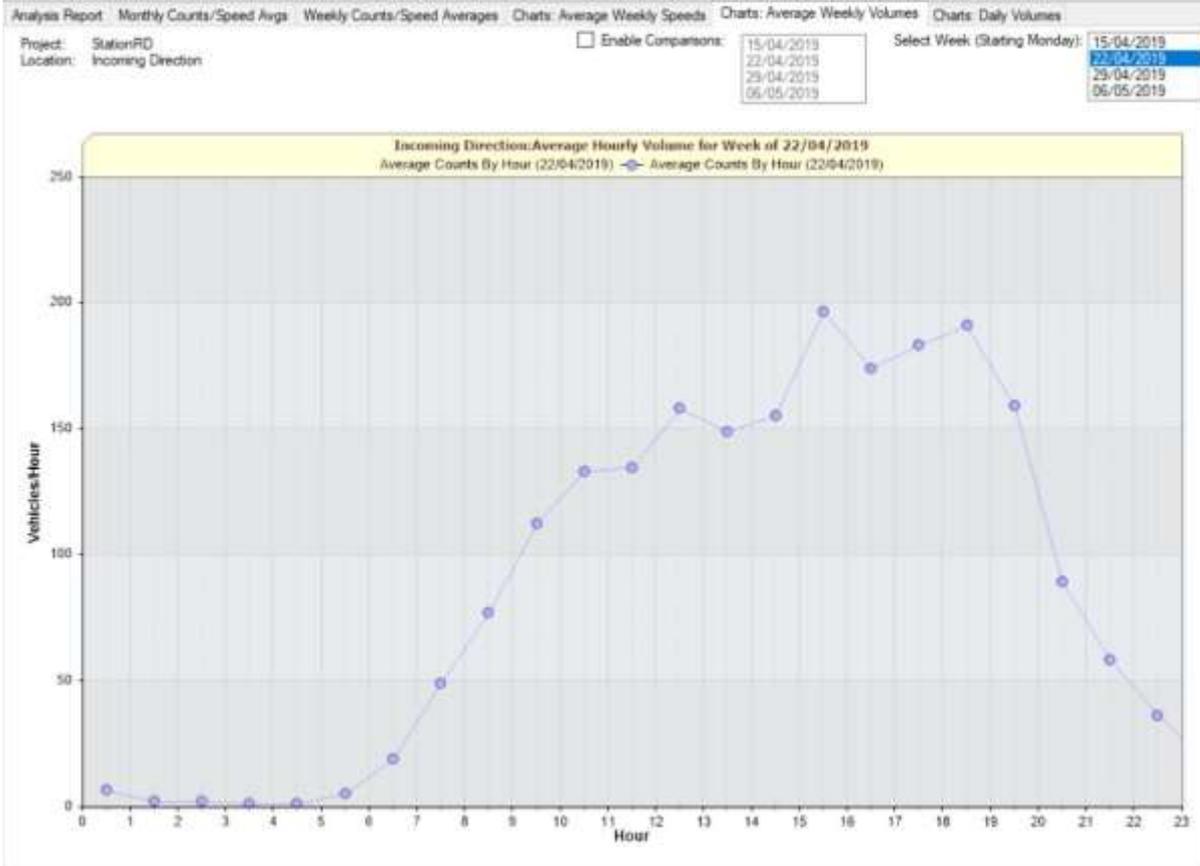
Week 1 16/04/2019 to 21/04/2019.            11075 vehicles  
Week 2 22/04/2019 to 28/04/2019            14247 vehicles  
Week 3 29/04/2019 to 03/05/2019            8731 vehicles

Total vehicle movements between Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019  
34053

### TRAFFIC ANALYSIS REPORT

For Project:	StationRD						
Location/Name:	Incoming Direction						
Report Generated:	09/05/2019 14:58						
Speed Intervals	5 mph						
Time Intervals	60 minutes						
Traffic Report From	4/16/2019 12:45:00 PM through 5/7/2019 11:45:00 AM						
85th Percentile Speed	39.6 mph						
85th Percentile Vehicles	28,945 counts						
Max Speed	70.0 mph on 5/1/2019 3:45:00 PM						
Total Vehicles	34,053 count						
AADT:	1,625						
<b>Volumes - weekly vehicle counts</b>							
	<b>Time</b>	<b>5 Day</b>	<b>7 Day</b>				
Average Daily		1,835	1,810				
AM peak	10:00 to 11:00	116	119				
PM peak	5:00 to 6:00	193	175				
<b>Speed</b>							
Speed limit:		35 mph					
85th Percentile Speed:		39.6 mph					
Average Speed:		33.7 mph					
		<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Count over limit		2,092	2,979	3,099	3,149	2,061	1,892
% over limit		53.5	50.4	48.4	47.3	49.4	46.9
Avg speeder		39.0	38.8	38.9	38.9	39.1	38.9

# Summarised weekly by average over hourly periods



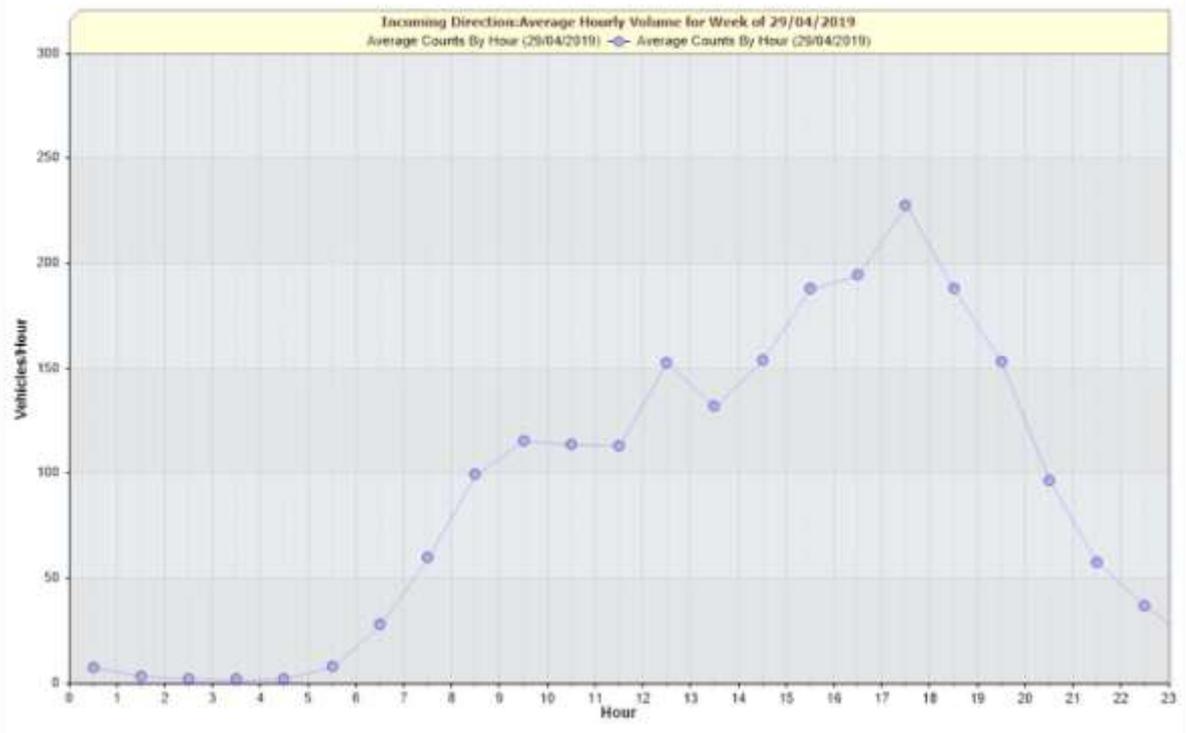
Project: StationRD  
 Location: Incoming Direction

Enable Comparisons:

- 15/04/2019
- 22/04/2019
- 29/04/2019
- 06/05/2019

Select Week (Starting Monday):

- 15/04/2019
- 22/04/2019
- 29/04/2019
- 06/05/2019



Conclusion from the survey.

The number of vehicle movements in and out of the village along Station Rd adjacent to the entrance/exit from St George's Gate is already at a very high level

The Parish Council are gravely concerned that any further housing developments off Station Rd will cause this traffic to increase considerably and the highway infrastructure of the village cannot cope with more traffic.

Please note that the tables and graphs were taken from the Houston Radar Stats Analyser Pro Software version 8.02.0014



The raw data is available should it be needed

# Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan

Pre-Submission Draft

**DRAFT** September 2020



Middleton St George  
Parish

## Foreword

To be written by the chair of the group.

DRAFT

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# 1. Introduction

## Background to neighbourhood planning

- 1.1 Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans are community-led, prepared by town and parish councils and set out guidance on how new development will be managed. They do this by creating land use 'planning policies'. Plans can deal with a wide range of issues like housing, employment, heritage and transport. In some cases, they may only focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area. Policies within neighbourhood plans cannot block development or support less than already committed in the statutory development plan. What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood plans can also cover issues which are not related to the use and development of land. They can provide a useful document in which a town or parish council can establish priorities for action to improve their area. These are often referred to as 'community actions'. However, the main purpose of a neighbourhood plan is to set policies for the use and development of land.
- 1.3 Once a neighbourhood plan has been: examined by an independent examiner; agreed at the referendum stage by the local community; and 'made' (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

## Planning context

- 1.4 As they are part of the development plan, neighbourhood plans must be prepared in line with legal requirements. The way in which neighbourhood plans are prepared and the policies they contain are tested by an independent examiner who assesses whether the plan meets the 'basic conditions' to ensure they are legally compliant. Neighbourhood plans must:
  - Have regard to national planning policy and guidance;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
  - Be compatible with European obligations.

### National planning policy and guidance

- 1.5 National planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) respectively.

### Development plan

- 1.6 Currently, the development plan for the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan area consists of the Darlington Core Strategy (2011) and the saved policies of the Darlington Local Plan (1997). Darlington Borough Council (DBC) are currently preparing a new local plan that will replace the existing policies.
- 1.7 The Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan ('the plan') has been informed by both the adopted and emerging planning policies and their evidence base.

Sustainable development

- 1.8 The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development as defined by the NPPF. This specifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be the basis for every plan and every planning decision. In brief, 'sustainable development' is about growth which delivers economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The basic conditions statement, that will accompany the submission plan, will explain how the implementation of the plan is expected to contribute to sustainable development.

European obligations

- 1.9 Neighbourhood plans must be compatible with EU obligations, specifically the strategic environmental assessment regulations (SEA) and habitats regulations, through an appropriate assessment (AA). The SEA is a way of ensuring that the environmental implications of policies are taken into account before plans are brought into force. The AA process aims to ensure that the plan will not result in significant damage to internationally important nature conservation sites. DBC provided a screening opinion on whether a SEA and/ or AA was required for the plan. The screening opinion is available on the DBS website. The conclusion was that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts and as such does not need a SEA. In addition, that the neighbourhood plan will not have a likely significant effect in relation to the habitat regulations.

**Background to the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.10 On 14 May 2019, the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Area was designated by DBC. The plan area comprises the parish of Middleton St George, excluding land at Teesside International Airport, see figure 1. The process of preparing the plan began in the spring of 2019, when residents were asked for feedback on a draft vision and objectives for the plan. These had been informed by earlier work undertaken by the former Middleton St George Parish Council that existed prior to parish boundary changes in 2016.
- 1.11 Early engagement has informed the preparation of this document, which is the pre-submission draft plan. The draft plan identities:
- The context in which the plan has been prepared – an overview of Middleton St George, the **opportunities and challenges** for the plan to address;
  - A **positive vision** for the future of the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan area;
  - How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through planning policies** i.e. the policies that **will be used to determine planning applications** within the plan area - providing a framework for sustainable development; and
  - How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through community actions** i.e. measures which are **intended to encourage action and influence decisions** taken by relevant bodies.
- 1.12 Full details of the engagement undertaken to inform the preparation of the plan will be included within a statement of consultation which will accompany the submission draft plan.
- 1.13 The period covered by the plan is to 2036, this aligns with the emerging Darlington Local Plan. During this period, the neighbourhood plan will be reviewed and updated where required.
- 1.14 The background documents that have informed the preparation of this pre-submission plan are available online at: xxxxxx

## How to get involved

- 1.15 The draft plan has been informed by community engagement and evidence work. We need your input to ensure the plan and policies we have drafted fully reflect the views of local people.
- 1.16 You can let us know your views on this draft plan in the following ways:
- By completing the online questionnaire, available at xxx;
  - By email to: msgclerk@aol.com; or
  - By letter to: Middleton St George Parish Council, 5 Whitebridge Drive, Darlington, DL1 3TY.
- 1.17 Comments must be received by **12noon on 10 November 2020.**

## Next steps

- 1.18 Following the end of the consultation period the parish council will review the responses received and identify if any changes need to be made to the plan and its evidence base.
- 1.19 The current timetable for the next stages of the plan making process are:
- Submission of the plan to DBC for examination: winter 2020;
  - Consultation on the submission plan: winter 2020;
  - Examination of the plan by an independent examiner: spring 2020;
  - Referendum: spring 2020;
  - Neighbourhood plan 'made' by DBC: spring/ summer 2020.

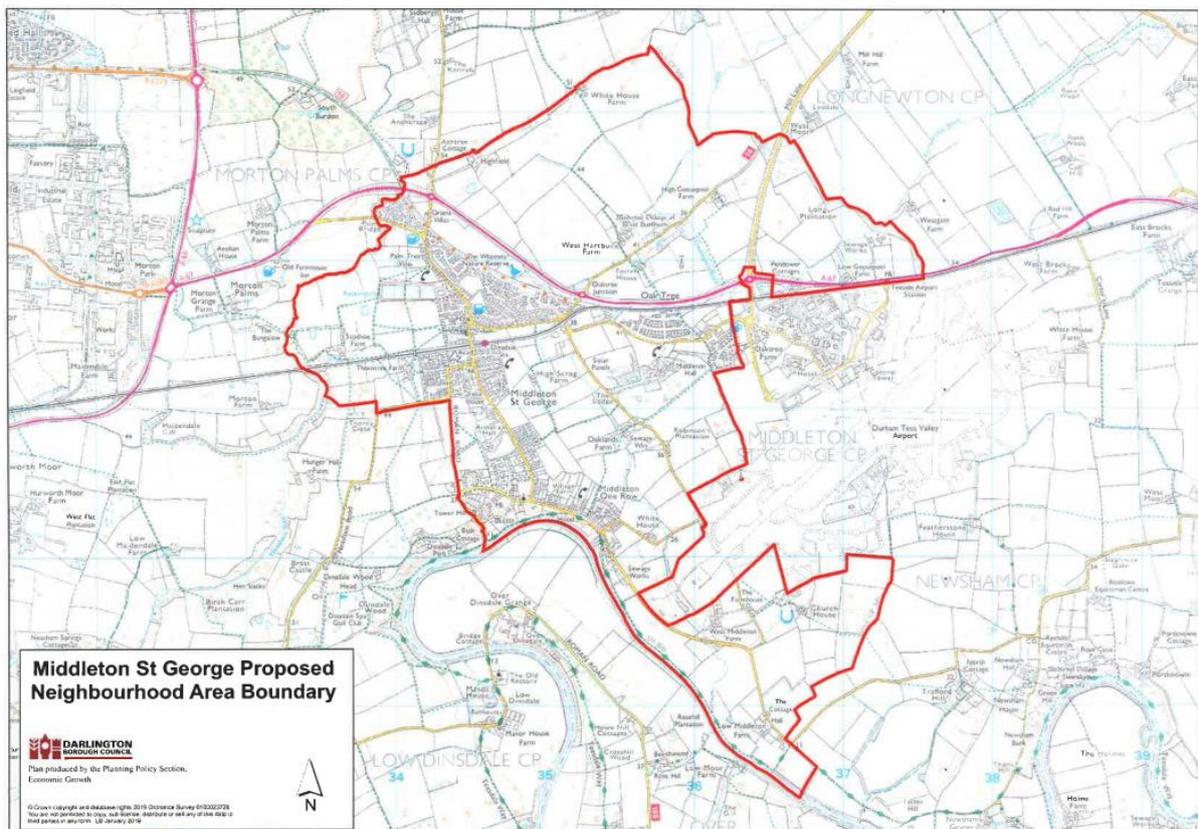


Figure 1: Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan Area

## 2. The key issues for the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan

### Background to Middleton St George

#### The growth of the parish

- 2.1 Middleton St George is located approximately five miles to the east of Darlington Town Centre and 10 miles to the west of Stockton and Middlesbrough. Development in the plan area is largely a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although it has much earlier origins. The village developed following the opening of the Stockton to Darlington railway, the route of which lies to the northern side of the village. The Stockton and Darlington Railway was the first public steam railway in the world and opened in 1825. The route is now a public footpath. Middleton St George maintains its railway link with Dinsdale Station on the branch line from Darlington, via Middlesbrough to Saltburn.
- 2.2 Various phases of development of the parish followed, including the creation of RAF Middleton St George built to the east of the village during the Second World War. The RAF continued to use the base after the war but withdrew in 1964. It was reopened as Teesside International Airport in 1966, later renamed Durham Tees Valley Airport and now renamed Teesside International Airport. The airport still operates and provides limited services to Aberdeen and Amsterdam as well as the home for local flying clubs and aviation companies.
- 2.3 Middleton St George has significant historical interest. The village has an industrial past with a substantial foundry and several other factories having been situated in the village. Over time, these have disappeared and those employed in Darlington and Teesside primarily inhabit the area. Middleton St George is now predominantly residential.

#### Population and housing

- 2.4 Until the mid-1990s, Middleton St George was relatively small, with a population of approximately 1,800. However, following the demise of industry and the availability of brownfield sites, the population grew rapidly. The population at the time of the 2011 census was 4,337.
- 2.5 The 2011 Census reveals that Middleton St George has a high proportion of people in the 45-65 and 85 and over age categories than both Darlington and England. The 65-84 age group is roughly in line with Darlington and England, but it is the 0-15 and 16-24 age groups where Middleton St George has a lower population than those wider areas. So, while Middleton St George's population may be expected to age faster than the Borough, its chief demographic challenge is the deficit in the younger replacement population.

Table 1: Rate of change in the age structure of the population, 2001-2011

Age group	Middleton St George	Darlington	England
0-15	3.0%	2.1%	1.2%
16-24	35.6%	18.5%	17.2%
25-44	13.6%	-0.7%	1.4%
45-64	20.8%	16.5%	15.2%
65-84	8.0%	8.3%	9.1%
85 and over	-10.1%	28.4%	23.7%

- 2.6 With regard to household composition, Middleton St George differs from Darlington Borough, as there are lower numbers of one person households and more families. However, the plan area has a notably higher proportion of family households with no children.

Table 2: Household composition (by household) 2011

Household composition		Middleton St George	Darlington	England
One person household	<b>Total</b>	24.9%	32.4%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	9.5%	13.1%	12.4%
	Other	15.4%	19.2%	17.9%
One family only	<b>Total</b>	70.9%	62.9%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	8.8%	8.3%	8.1%
	With no children	23.4%	18.5%	17.6%
	With dependent children	29.1%	27.1%	26.5%
	All children Non-Dependent	9.6%	9.1%	9.6%
Other household types	<b>Total</b>	4.2%	4.7%	8.0%

2.7 In terms of dwelling type, the 2011 census shows that there were 1811 households in Middleton St George, living in 821 detached houses, 496 semi-detached, 335 terraced houses and 153 flats. The plan area is characterised by a proportion of detached houses that is almost twice as large as Darlington’s with significantly lower proportions of semi-detached and terraced homes.

Table 3: accommodation type, 2011

Dwelling type		Middleton St George	Darlington	England
Whole house or bungalow	Detached	60.2%	31.1%	22.4%
	Semi-detached	22.8%	31.5%	31.2%
	Terraced	12.9%	24.9%	24.5%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	Purpose-built block of flats or tenement	2.1%	10.0%	16.4%
	Parts of a converted or shared house	1.4%	1.3%	3.8%
	In commercial building	0.5%	0.9%	1.0%

### Services, facilities and connectivity

2.8 The plan area has a number of shops. The primary one is a small Londis convenience store, which also houses a post office. There is also a second small convenience store, the Country Harvest. Other shops include a small pet shop, a picture framer, a barber, two hairdressers and a betting shop. Other services and facilities include: a GP surgery; veterinary surgery; three public houses; and a hotel.

2.9 Schooling is provided for 4 to 11 year old children at the St George’s Church of England Academy, which is a voluntary aided school. The school is relatively modern having been constructed on the site of the previous school, which was destroyed by fire in 2003. Secondary education is available for 11 to 16 year old children at Hurworth School which is located approximately 4.6 miles from the village (outside the plan area) and to which children from the village are transported by bus. Secondary education for 11 to 16 year old children is also available at St Aidan’s Church of England Academy in Darlington (also outside the plan area), which is located approximately four miles from the village.

2.10 A range of leisure and amenity facilities are available in the plan area. There is a recreation ground, which incorporates a children’s play area and football pitch. In addition, there is a well-established cricket club and a community centre, which offers a range of leisure pursuits. The community centre is close to the water park. The water park consists of three former reservoirs, which have been decommissioned and are now used for pursuits such as fishing and model boating. There is also a multi-use games area.

- 2.11 The plan area has a number of public footpaths, including one which follows the route of the original railway line (National Cycle Route 14) and runs through the Whinnies Local Nature Reserve. The Teesdale Way long distance footpath also follows the river close to Middleton One Row.

### Environment

- 2.12 Residents of the plan area benefit from easy access to a wealth of green spaces, including: the water park; the Whinnies Nature Reserve; Haxby Road and Station Road play areas and sports field; The Front; and three allotments. There are a number of important environmental designations within the plan area, including the Whinnies Local Nature Reserve, woodland priority habitat and land on the national forest inventory. The Neasham Fen Site of Special Scientific Interest lies just outside the plan area in Neasham Parish.
- 2.13 The plan area sits within two landscape character areas. The area surrounding Middleton St George and Oak Tree is categorised as 'Middleton Farmland', which is a largely flat, farmed plateau north of the River Tees. To the south, from Middleton One Row, the area lies within the 'Tees Valley' character area, with a dramatic incised valley cut in by the River Tees, with views over the flood plain and valley. Key landscape features across the plan area include woodland, the River Tees and its associated riverbanks.
- 2.14 Part of Middleton St George and Middleton One Row is a Conservation Area, the character is provided by large gardens and open spaces which run down from The Front at Middleton One Row to the banks of the River Tees. The plan area contains 16 listed buildings, all of which are grade II apart from one, Low Middleton Hall, which is grade II\*. Tower Hill motte castle is a scheduled monument, which includes a well preserved Norman motte situate in a prominent position overlooking the River Tees. There is also a deserted medieval village (of West Hartburn) north of the A67, which is also a scheduled monument. A historic Roman Road links Tower Hill Earthworks and Pounty's Bridge in Middleton One Row with Middleton St George.

### **Key issues**

- 2.15 Early engagement identified that there were a number of important issues for the neighbourhood plan to look to address, including the:
- Importance of natural and built environment and the heritage of the area;
  - Impact of insensitive new housing development on the character of the area;
  - Lack of affordable housing;
  - Concern over the level of development coming forward and lack of infrastructure to support it;
  - Traffic levels/ highway safety;
  - The need to protect important open spaces from development;
  - Impact of the ageing population.
- 2.16 The feedback from early engagement informed the preparation of the vision and objectives for the neighbourhood plan as well as the planning policies and community actions, which present opportunities to tackle the issues identified.

### 3. Vision and objectives

#### Vision

- 3.1 The vision sets out what the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve over the plan period to 2036, it informs all of the draft policies and community actions contained within this pre-submission plan.

Vision
<p><i>By 2036 the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan Area will comprise a sustainable and cohesive community. Improvements will have been made to the local environment and the management of traffic which enhance the quality of life of residents.</i></p> <p><i>Middleton St George will provide accessible local facilities and its communities will be well-connected, via sustainable transport routes, to Darlington Town Centre and the wider Tees Valley area, whilst remaining visually distinct and separate from the conurbation.</i></p> <p><i>The important historic and environmental character of the area will have been maintained and enhanced for future generations by ensuring new development is of an appropriate scale and design.</i></p>

#### Objectives

- 3.2 To deliver the vision, four objectives have been developed. The objectives clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement. The planning policies and community actions contained within this pre-submission plan will deliver the objectives.

Objectives
<p><b>Objective 1 - Quality of life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring new development: is sustainable and embeds sustainable construction techniques and renewable energy; maintains and enhances local distinctiveness; and contributes positively to the built, historic and natural environment of the plan area.</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective 2 - Community well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building on the diverse needs of existing and future residents. Supporting the provision of different types of housing that people can afford and meet identified needs and ensuring the local community have access to the services, infrastructure and facilities they need.</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective 3 - Sustainable economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supporting the economy of the plan area, particularly small-scale enterprises.</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective 4 - Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring that the environmental quality of the plan area is protected by effectively managing traffic as well as promoting access to sustainable modes of transport, which connect people effectively and efficiently to the social, economic, educational, recreational and cultural facilities which they require on a day to day basis.</li></ul>

## 4. Quality of life

### Background

- 4.1 The quality of life within the plan area is highly valued by local residents, this has been confirmed during early engagement on the plan. The local community want to ensure that new development contributes positively to the built, historic and natural environment of the plan area. As well as achieving a balance between development and protecting important green spaces. This is recognised within plan objective 1.

### Sustainable development

- 4.2 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It highlights three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental) which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The NPPF therefore includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The neighbourhood plan has an important role in supporting the delivery of sustainable development. Policy MSG1 requires all new development proposals to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy will support the delivery of all the objectives of the plan.

#### Policy MSG1: Sustainable development

A presumption in favour of sustainable development will be exercised in the determination of planning applications. In seeking to ensure that development is sustainable, it will be necessary to demonstrate how development, where appropriate, would:

- a. Make efficient and effective use of land, by encouraging the re-use of previously development land and buildings where possible;
- b. Minimise the impact and mitigate the likely effects of climate change;
- c. Minimise any impact on amenity for new and existing residents, business and other land uses in the vicinity of the proposed development;
- d. Protect or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings;
- e. Support the health and well-being of the local community;
- f. Ensure the quality of biodiversity, as well as the natural and water environment is maintained and enhanced;
- g. Address contamination or land instability issues; and
- h. Ensure that all infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms is either in place or can be provided prior to the development being brought into use.

### Design

- 4.3 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, it creates better places in which people live and work. It is fundamental to what the planning and development process should deliver and will ensure that new development contributes positively to the local environment and therefore enhances the quality of life of the local community.

- 4.4 As part of the evidence base supporting the preparation of the plan, AECOM prepared a design guide<sup>1</sup> to inform policy development. The design guide explains the evolution of the settlement pattern of the parish, describes movement and streets, landscape and heritage, neighbourhood structure as well as the built form and character. The design guide also includes design codes which are included as annex 2 to this plan. The design vision identified as part of the work on the design guide is set out below, as are the design aims.

### The design vision

*The standard of all new housing schemes will improve significantly with thoughtfully designed new homes that contribute to the overall character and local distinctiveness of the parish. These homes will sit well in their landscape, movement and built-form contexts adding to the sense of place with modern but sensitive designs based on local precedents.*

*The local community and the parish council will be engaged by developers and have their ideas for how and where to develop the village listened to. The local authority will have this clear evidence to inform their decisions on planning applications.*

*The village and community will take significant strides towards being carbon neutral and will welcome any exemplar schemes following on from the Waterside bungalows example. A diverse range of sustainability measures will be promoted by different developers and these houses should prove popular due to unique designs and low energy costs. Most measures will be on a home by home basis for new build rather than area wide solutions.*

*The village will continue to benefit from a great array of facilities and activities. The village will also display its identity and diverse history in several key focal spaces including the park, community hub and the Square through public art, landscaping schemes and signage. Welcoming pedestrian and cycling environments and long-distance cycle connections will see cyclists visit the Square and use the local cafes and pubs, using the more welcoming outdoor seating space.*

*Development on the primary routes through the villages will improve and establish a rich and diverse building frontage that provides a good sense of enclosure to these main streets. The three sub-settlements will remain separated by green gaps and hold on to their unique identity and different roles within the parish. The public realm will be reclaimed as a place for people not cars via key public realm projects.*

*Development on the edge of the village will respect its landscape context and retain significant green corridors around public rights of way that allow for views outwards and pleasant walking and cycling leisure routes back into the village, creating a multi-functional green network for recreation use.*

### Design aims – making Middleton St George Distinctive

1. A parish of historic character, not a village-suburb to Darlington
2. A 'green village' with a variety of green spaces and planting that is progressing towards being carbon-neutral, with an innovative outlook;

<sup>1</sup> [Add link](#)

3. A parish of three sub-settlements: Middleton One Row, Middleton St George and Oak Tree;
4. A diverse parish community with high quality affordable housing that meets local needs; and
5. An attractive, safe and characterful parish with a range of strong, distinctive identities.

- 4.5 The design vision, aims and codes relate to all new development within the plan area. The design codes seek to ensure that the parish grows sensitively and that it does so in consultation with the local community. The sensitive growth of the plan area, as a series of unique villages, will only be realised by a strong commitment to detail design, sustainability and the focus to deliver developments that respond to the unique character of the plan area and are not just add-on housing estates.
- 4.6 Policy MSG2 therefore encourages high quality and sustainable design and defines the key principles that should be addressed as part of proposals for new development, whilst seeking to ensure the plan area does not place unnecessary restrictions on new development. The policy is cross cutting and will help to deliver all the plan objectives.

#### **Policy MSG2: Design**

Development should conserve local distinctiveness by demonstrating high quality design which both respects and responds to the existing character of the area, it should accord with the requirements of the Middleton St George Design Code (annex 2). Development will be supported where it:

- a. Maintains and where possible enhances the character of the locality, paying particular attention to the appearance, size, scale and density;
- b. Uses materials which complement those of adjoining and surrounding buildings;
- c. Conserves the significance of heritage assets and their setting;
- d. Takes account of the topography and natural features of the site and considers the impact of the development when viewed from surrounding areas of countryside;
- e. Respects established building lines and creates boundaries and roof lines that are in keeping with the street scene;
- f. Demonstrates a commitment to sustainable design to minimise energy use;
- g. Provides adequate refuse and recycling storage, which is incorporated into the scheme to minimise visual impact;
- h. Adopts the principles of sustainable drainage, where appropriate;
- i. Ensures the development will not prejudice the amenity of its future occupiers or that of adjacent properties in terms of overshadowing, loss of light, dominance, loss of privacy, noise or general disturbance;
- j. Ensures that lighting associated with the development will not have a significant effect on residential amenity or wildlife;
- k. Would not result in unacceptable levels of noise, air or water pollution; and
- l. Creates a safe, accessible and well-connected environment that meets the needs of its users.

Where a design and access statement is required as part of a planning application, there should be a clear demonstration of how the proposal has responded to the above principles, as well as the design codes, as an integral part of the design process.

### **Embedding energy efficiency and renewable energy**

- 4.7 The building regulations address the standard of energy efficiency in buildings. However, neighbourhood plans can provide further guidance to seek to ensure that energy efficiency considerations have guided the design process. This includes the consideration of opportunities to incorporate passive design measures, such as maximising the potential for solar gain and natural ventilation through the siting, orientation and layout of development. Other key considerations include the potential to incorporate renewable energy, water cycling and waste reduction.
- 4.8 It is acknowledged that many forms of renewable energy generation can be installed on existing properties under permitted development rights. Policy MSG3 provides a positive policy framework which supports new developments which maximise the ability to embed energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. This approach should support the delivery of plan objectives 1 and 2.

#### **Policy MSG3: Embedding energy efficiency and renewable energy**

Development will be supported which embed a commitment to sustainable design and construction.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how the development:

- a. Incorporates passive design measures to improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting;
- b. Includes measures to reduce waste generated during construction and ensuring there is appropriate storage space and segregation facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste;
- c. Ensures that energy and water efficiency measures are incorporated into the development where appropriate;
- d. Aims to meet the Building Research Establishment BREEAM building standard 'excellent' or equivalent standard, where the proposal is for non-residential development;
- e. Incorporates on-site energy generation from renewable sources, where appropriate; and
- f. Reduces energy demands of historic buildings where appropriate, subject to compliance with other relevant policies on historic assets.

Where a design and access statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear demonstration of how the proposal has responded to the above principles as an integral part of the design development process.

### **General location of new development**

- 4.9 The Darlington Local Plan defines settlement boundaries for Middleton St George, Middleton One Row and Oak Tree, these have been reviewed through the preparation of this plan. The purposes of settlement boundaries are to manage the location of new development and protect the countryside from unsuitable development, preventing the merger of settlements and maintaining their character. The NPPF identifies that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless specific criteria are met.

- 4.10 The proposed boundaries have been drawn to support the sustainable growth of the settlements within the plan area. They take account of extant planning permissions and seek to establish a logical shape to the edges of the villages, whilst supporting an appropriate level of development. Irregular incursions into the open countryside have been avoided and the boundaries have been drawn along features which are easily identified on the ground. Further detail on the proposed settlement boundaries is contained within the settlement boundary background paper<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.11 Policy MSG4 therefore seeks to focus development within the Middleton St George, Middleton One Row and Oak Tree settlement boundaries. It also describes when development outside the settlement boundaries may be appropriate. This policy will support the delivery of all the plan objectives.

#### **Policy MSG4: General location of new development**

To promote sustainable development, the focus of development across the plan area will be within the Middleton St George, Middleton One Row and Oak Tree Settlement Boundaries, as defined on the policies map.

New development outside the defined settlement boundaries will be supported where it:

- a. Is directly related to the business and operational needs of agriculture, forestry or other land-based rural industries;
- b. Supports the sustainable growth of existing businesses and enterprises;
- c. Is a sustainable visitor attraction that is related to the experience or interpretation of the countryside, or a sustainable leisure development which respects the character of the countryside, only where identified needs are not met by existing facilities within a settlement boundary;
- d. Will provide local services or community facilities which support the rural community;
- e. Is a house, the design of which:
  - i. Is truly outstanding or innovative and of the highest standard, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;
  - ii. Reflects the highest standards in architecture;
  - iii. Significantly enhances its immediate setting; and
  - iv. Is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area;
- f. Comprises an appropriately designed extension to an existing building or buildings. The extension should be subservient to and respect the scale and appearance of the host building; or
- g. Involves the conversion of redundant rural buildings. The building should be structurally sound and its conversion achievable without significant extension to the original structure. The conversion should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building and its setting.

#### **Green infrastructure**

- 4.12 The NPPF defines green infrastructure as: *‘A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities’*. As a network, green infrastructure can include: parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include:

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<sup>2</sup> Add link

streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls. As green infrastructure is close to where people live, it can play a key role in supporting the health of the local community. It also supports wildlife, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as helping to improve air quality.

- 4.13 Policy MSG5 therefore seeks to protect and where practical improve the green infrastructure network of the plan area, supporting the delivery of plan objectives 1 and 2. The identification has been informed by allocations within the adopted and emerging development plan, including the Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.14 The green infrastructure identified on the policies map includes: wildlife networks and corridors, green wedges, open spaces including parks and informal open spaces, playing pitches, allotments, public rights of way, trees and woodlands, private gardens and linkages to the wider countryside. The green infrastructure network has a strong link with the public rights of way network and therefore provides vital linkages from the built-up area to the countryside. The key elements of the green infrastructure network include: the Whinnies, the water park, Almora Hall, The Front, Teesdale Way and the banks of the River Tees.

#### Policy MSG5: Green Infrastructure

New development should seek to protect and where practical, improve and extend green infrastructure. When determining planning applications, consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Protect and enhance green infrastructure assets, provide high quality links between existing assets and/or provide additional uses for multifunctionality;
- b. Secure improved access to green infrastructure;
- c. Improve the connectivity of habitats;
- d. Create a sense of place by protecting and/or fully integrating high quality, green infrastructure into the proposed development to reflect the character of the plan area;
- e. Integrate green infrastructure with sustainable drainage systems and the management of flood risk; and
- f. Address the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period.

Proposals that would include the loss of part of the green infrastructure network, as defined on the policies map, should demonstrate that alternative provision, equivalent to or better than the green infrastructure proposed to be lost in terms of its quantity and quality, can be provided in equally accessible locations that maintain or create new green infrastructure connections.

#### Green wedge

- 4.15 The Middleton One Row Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2010) highlights the importance of the green space along Middleton Lane in the area between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. This area is also identified as giving key views of the conservation area and wider countryside.

<sup>3</sup> <https://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/document-library/darlingtons-green-infrastructure-strategy/>

- 4.16 The land lying between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row has been subject to numerous development proposals over the last five years. For example, a proposal for 280 dwellings and a 60 bed care home on land to the west of Middleton Lane was refused by the council in March 2019<sup>4</sup>. Whilst an appeal was submitted, this was subsequently withdrawn. Land to the east of Middleton Lane has been subject to three residential planning applications, all of which were refused by the council. The most recent refusal<sup>5</sup> was subject to an appeal, which was dismissed<sup>6</sup>. In the decision letter, the inspector refers to the importance of site, as a key feature of green space along Middleton Lane. Also, that the site allows the countryside to permeate the built-up area with its largely undeveloped agricultural appearance, therefore contributing to the rural qualities of the conservation area and its significance. Reference is also made to the importance of views through the site to the wider countryside and that the coalescence would unacceptably alter the character of the area.
- 4.17 The proposed green wedge therefore seeks to protect and enhance the significance of the conservation area and prevent the coalescence of Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. In addition, the green wedge seeks to protect the important landscape character of the area and its valuable role as a wildlife corridor.
- 4.18 The NPPF is clear that one of the ways the planning system can contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment is by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- 4.19 Policy MSG6 therefore seeks to support proposals within the green wedge where they do not conflict with the purposes of designation. This policy will support the delivery of plan objectives 1 and 2.

#### **Policy MSG6: Green wedge**

Development within the green wedge identified on the policies map would only be supported where it does not conflict with the purposes of designation, which are to:

- Protect and enhance the significance of the of the Middleton One Row Conservation area;
- Prevent the coalescence of Middleton St George and Middleton One Row, supporting the distinctiveness of the two settlements;
- Protect the important landscape character and visual amenity of the area; and
- Provide a valuable wildlife corridor and habitat.

#### **Biodiversity**

- 4.20 The plan area includes a wide range of species and habitats<sup>7</sup> including: including the Whinnies Local Nature Reserve, woodland priority habitat and land on the national forest inventory. There are also a number of sites within the plan area which provide important habitats, such as: the Waterpark, the former Stockton and Darlington Railway route trackbed, The Front, the three allotments and the field at Almora Hall. There have been a number of bird, flora and fauna surveys undertaken at The Front, which identify that there is a plethora of fauna and flora and the site is visited by a number of birds.

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<sup>4</sup> DBC application reference 18/00275/OUT

<sup>5</sup> DBC application reference 18/01108/FUL

<sup>6</sup> APP/N1350/W/19/3240898

<sup>7</sup> Information obtained from: Natural England (Magic Map)

- 4.21 Policy MSG7 therefore seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity across the plan area and will support the delivery of plan objective 1.

#### **Policy MSG7: Biodiversity**

Development should protect and enhance biodiversity by seeking to ensure biodiversity net gains, where possible. There should be no loss or significant harm to biodiversity sites, protected species or their habitats. Where development would result in the loss or significant harm to biodiversity, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated, or as a last resort compensated for.

#### **Local green space**

- 4.22 Green spaces are a vital part of a vibrant and healthy community and are of great importance to the character and identity of a place. They are valued for a wide range of reasons including: visual amenity; historic significance; recreational value; tranquillity; and richness of wildlife. Uncontrolled changes to green spaces can irrevocably alter their special character or intrinsic value.
- 4.23 The NPPF enables neighbourhood plans to designate areas of local green space for special protection, thereby preventing development on these sites other than in very special circumstances. These spaces do not need to be publicly accessible but must be in reasonably close proximity to the community they serve as well as being demonstrably special to them, holding a particular local significance. The designation cannot be applied to an extensive track of land.
- 4.24 The sites listed in policy MSG8 and shown on the policies map are proposed to be designated as local green space as they meet the criteria set out within national policy and guidance. A background paper has been prepared to outline the reasons why the sites are of particular importance to the local community and to explain the process that led to their proposed designation<sup>8</sup>. The designation of the sites will assist with the delivery of plan objectives 1 and 2.

#### **Policy MSG8: Local Green Space**

The following areas, as defined on the policies map, are designated as local green space and will be protected from development as a result of their particular local significance or community value:

- LGS01 Water Park, Station Road
- LGS02 The Whinnies
- LGS03 Former Stockton and Darlington Railway Route and Trackbed in MSG
- LGS04 Land at the Platform 1 pub
- LGS05 Haxby Road Play Area and former cornmill site
- LGS06 Tower Hill to The Front, Middleton One Row
- LGS07 64 Middleton Lane (Mown Meadows)
- LGS08 The War Memorial and Garden
- LGS09 The Front, Middleton One Row

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<sup>8</sup> [Add link to background paper.](#)

- LGS10 Station Road Playing Field and Playground
- LGS11 The Fields Behind The Greenway and north of the railway line
- LGS12 St George's Church and Grounds
- LGS13 Belle Vue Allotments, Belle Vue Terrace
- LGS14 Killinghall Row Allotments, Killinghall Row
- LGS15 Sadberge Road Allotments
- LGS16 Land off Middleton Lane, after Pine Tree Grove
- LGS17 Virginia Estate
- LGS18 Almora Hall field, off Middleton Lane

Inappropriate development on land designated as local green space will only be permitted where very special circumstances can be demonstrated in accordance with national Green Belt policy.

### Protected open space

- 4.25 There are many areas of open space which are valued for their local amenity value and for formal and informal recreational purposes, but which do not meet the detailed allocation criteria for designation as local green space.
- 4.26 The sites listed in policy MSG9 and shown on the policies map are proposed to be designated as protected as they are important to the local community. A background paper has been prepared to outline the reasons why the sites are important and to explain the process that led to their proposed designation<sup>9</sup>. The designation of the sites will assist with the delivery of plan objectives 1 and 2.

### Policy MSG9: Protected open space

The following areas of open space, as defined on the policies map, have been identified as contributing to local amenity and character and will be protected from development:

- POS1 The green at the Greenway
- POS2 The green at Grendon Gardens
- POS3 The green at Hunters Green
- POS4 The green at Woosington Drive
- POS5 The green at Ropner Gardens
- POS6 The Cricket Field and Pavillion
- POS7 Oak Tree Estate
- POS8 St Georges' C of E Academy playing fields

Development that will result in the loss of protected open space will only be supported where the applicant has robustly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that the:

- a. Open space is surplus to requirements; or
- b. Loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by at least equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, including amenity value, in a suitable location in the near vicinity; or
- c. Development is for alternative open space provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

<sup>9</sup> Add link to background paper.

New development should provide, as a minimum, the standards of open and recreation space defined within the most up to date and relevant guidance.

### **Heritage assets**

- 4.27 Heritage assets can either be designated or non-designated. Designated assets have statutory status within the plan area and include listed buildings and conservation areas. A non-designated asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape of lesser significance.
- 4.28 The glossary of the NPPF defines a heritage asset as:  
*'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*
- 4.29 The NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Also, that planning decisions affecting a heritage asset are required to be based on a sound understanding of the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposal on that significance.
- 4.30 Middleton St George has a diverse heritage, most notably its links with the Stockton and Darlington Railway and also Roman occupation, as well as the RAF base. Local heritage is important to the local community, not only its designated heritage assets. The early origins of the village have resulted in the parish containing fascinating archaeology including the scheduled Norman motte and bailey castle at Middleton One Row, which is a scheduled monument. There is also the deserted medieval village of West Hartburn, north of the A67, which is also a scheduled monument. As a result, there is a high potential for important archaeological remains to survive in the parish, particularly around the scheduled monuments and the area to the south towards the lost Pountey's Bridge and the Roman Road, Rikenild Street.
- 4.31 Middleton One Row is designated as a conservation area and the plan area contains 16 listed buildings, all of which are grade II apart from one, Low Middleton Hall, which is grade II\*. The Middleton One Row Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2011) provides an overview of the historical development of the area, spatial and character analysis as well as information of loss, intrusion and damage to the conservation area. The conservation area character appraisal explains that the landscape setting of the area has a major impact on its character. It describes the impact of Roman occupation and links with the Normans and Saxons and highlights that there is high potential for archaeological remains, particularly within the conservation area.
- 4.32 The parish council is an active member of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone working group which is helping to rejuvenate and restore the route of the historic railway and to help realise its potential to become a major heritage attraction and visitor destination in the build up to its 2025 bicentenary. As part of the heritage action zone, a pilot conservation area is being developed for the part of the line within the parish.
- 4.33 Early engagement on the plan identified strong support for the protection and enhancement of heritage assets across the plan area. Policy MSG10 therefore seeks to ensure that appropriate weight is given to the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset supporting the delivery of plan objective 1.

#### **Policy MSG10: Heritage assets**

Where a development may impact on a heritage asset, applicants should provide information that describes the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. In the determination of development proposals:

- a. Great weight will be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm or loss to its significance will require clear and convincing justification in accordance with national policy; and
- b. A balanced judgment will be required to fully consider the effects of any development proposals affecting a non-designated heritage asset, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

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## 5. Community well-being

### Background

- 5.1 The NPPF identifies that the planning system has an important role to play in creating healthy, inclusive communities. NPPG defines a healthy community as a good place to grow up and grow old in, a community which supports healthy behaviours and supports reductions in health inequalities.
- 5.2 Plan objective 2 seeks to build on the strong sense of community across the plan area, whilst recognising the diverse needs of existing and future residents. It acknowledges that supporting the provision of different types of housing that people can afford, as well as that which meets identified needs, can support community well-being. In addition, objective 2 seeks to ensure that the local community has access to the services and facilities it needs.

### Housing mix

- 5.3 The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should positively support the strategic policies for the area and should not promote less development than is required by the local plan. A key role for the plan is to provide a policy framework to support the provision of a mix of homes to meet local needs. In order to inform the preparation of the plan, the parish council commissioned a housing needs assessment (HNA), prepared by AECOM as part of the government's technical support programme<sup>10</sup>.
- 5.4 Key issues from the HNA were:
- The plan areas share of DBCs local housing need as identified as part of the emerging local plan is 8 dwellings per year, or 136 units over the plan period 2019-2036;
  - If the adopted core strategy housing figure were used, the plan areas share of the housing need would be 7 dwellings per year, or 119 over the plan period;
  - Both projected figures are substantially lower than the 731 dwellings that are proposed to be allocated in the emerging Darlington Local Plan;
  - The plan area is characterised by an unusually high proportion of home ownership, as opposed to private and social renting;
  - The annual income required for a market sale home, in terms of mortgage availability and not including the cost of the deposit, is 77% higher than the average net household income locally;
  - The rate of private renting in Middleton St George increased by 250% in the decade between 2001 and 2011;
  - The social rented sector in the plan area is small. As this is the only secure tenure within reach of single-earning households on lower quartile incomes the number of social or affordable rented homes should be increased wherever possible;
  - Of the 136 dwellings that are identified as being needed over the plan period, 27 affordable housing units should be delivered. This is lower than the 38 households that are projected to need affordable housing to rent over the same period. It is suggested that there is additional need, or potential demand for 128 affordable home ownership homes over the plan period;
  - If the six major sites currently proposed to be allocated in the plan area in the emerging Darlington Local Plan, which total 731 dwellings, are delivered, 146 Affordable Housing

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<sup>10</sup> [Add link](#)

units will be provided on the basis of the local plan policy requirement, is well in excess of local need;

- Approximately 79% of the affordable housing units to be delivered should be offered as social or affordable rent, with the remaining 21% delivered as affordable routes to home ownership, with an emphasis on shared ownership as opposed to starter homes (which are less affordable in this area);
- There is a need to improve affordability in the plan area across all tenures. Therefore, new residential development should ensure a substantial proportion of smaller dwellings. Increasing the proportion of smaller homes and more affordable types should help to rebalance the housing stock in favour of options that are both suitable to the population profile as it evolves over time and that will combat growing affordability challenges; and
- There is a need to improve affordability across all tenures and that new residential development should ensure a substantial proportion of smaller dwellings. Increasing the proportion of smaller homes and more affordable types, should help rebalance the housing stock in favour of options that are both suitable to the population profile as it evolves over time and will combat growing affordability challenges.

- 5.5 To seek to ensure that a range and choice of housing is available, a mix of house sizes, types and tenures will be required to be provided through new development. An important element of the assessment of current housing needs is set out within the Middleton St George Housing Needs Assessment (2019) and the Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017). These documents should be used to guide decisions on planning applications. Policy MSG11 requires consideration of the need for particular housing types as part of the consideration of development proposals, helping to deliver plan objective 2.

#### **Policy MSG11: Housing mix**

To ensure that a range and choice of housing is available to meet identified need, the housing mix on housing sites should include: starter homes, homes for sale, and homes for social and private rent. The mix should have regard to and be informed by evidence of housing needs, including the current Middleton St George Housing Needs Assessment (2019) and the Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) and any subsequent updates. The only exception will be where the proposal is designed to meet a specific and identified housing need, which requires a particular type, format or tenure of housing.

#### **Affordable housing**

- 5.6 The NPPF states that affordable housing provision should not be sought on residential developments that are not major (less than 10 dwellings). However, where major development is proposed there is the expectation that at least 10% of the homes should be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups.
- 5.7 The information contained within the HNA identifies the significant affordability issues across the plan area. The parish council therefore consider the provision of affordable housing to be vital to allow young people and young families to get on the housing ladder and stay within the local community. Affordable housing could be available to buy or rented.

- 5.8 Policy MSG12 therefore seeks to support the delivery of affordable housing where there is an identified need. This will support the delivery of plan objective 2.

#### **Policy MSG12: Affordable housing**

All new residential development that contain ten or more open market residential dwellings or are on sites of 0.5 hectares or more, will be required to contribute to the provision of affordable housing.

The level and type of affordable housing to be delivered on each site will have regard to up to date evidence of affordable housing needs, including the current Middleton St George Housing Needs Assessment (2019) and the Darlington Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) and any subsequent updates.

There will be a presumption that the affordable housing contribution will be through the provision of affordable homes on the application site. Off-site provision or a financial contribution will only be supported where this can be robustly justified and the following criteria can be met:

- a. Off-site provision must be on a site that is agreed as being in a suitable location relative to the housing need to be met. Such provision will be secured and controlled by a planning obligation to ensure that the affordable housing is delivered alongside the housing on the principal site; or
- b. Where a financial contribution to off-site provision of affordable housing is agreed as an alternative to direct provision on site, the sum will be calculated at a rate to be determined at the time of the application by the local planning authority. The contribution will be paid to the local planning authority on commencement of development and will be used to deliver affordable housing within the neighbourhood plan area, where opportunities arise.

Any development proposal which involves the provision of affordable housing at a level below that required under the terms of this policy will need to be justified by an independent viability assessment of the scheme, costs and end values.

The affordable housing provided in pursuit of this policy for rent, discount market sales housing or where public grant funding is provided towards other affordable routes to home ownership will be made available to people in housing need at an affordable sale or rental cost for the life of the property. Any planning permission granted will be subject to appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations to secure:

- c. The amount and type of affordable housing;
- d. That the housing will be discounted at an appropriate level to ensure it is affordable by people identified as being in housing need; and
- e. A mechanism for the management of the new homes to ensure that the first and subsequent occupancies are restricted to people in housing need.

#### **Community services and facilities**

- 5.9 Community facilities are identified in the NPPF as: local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. These facilities enhance the sustainability of local communities and residential environments.

- 5.10 There are a variety of community facilities across the plan area, including: shops; a GP surgery; primary school; veterinary surgery; three public houses; a hotel; a recreation ground with football pitch and play area; cricket club; community centre; and a multi-use games area. In addition, there are a large number of community groups, clubs and societies that operate across the plan area, including: local history group; walking group; WI; cricket club; fishing club; model boats club; baby groups; as well as scouts and guides.
- 5.11 The availability of the current level of facilities within the plan area are essential to support the strong sense of community that exists. Policy MSG13 therefore supports the provision of new and enhancement of existing community facilities, as well seeking to resist the loss of existing facilities, this will assist with the delivery of plan objective 2.

#### **Policy MSG13: Community services and facilities**

Development proposals to enhance the provision of community services and facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a. The proposal will not generate unacceptable noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to adjoining properties;
- b. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on highway safety; and
- c. Access arrangements and sufficient off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided where practical without negatively impacting on adjoining uses.

Proposals that result in the loss of buildings or land for public or community use will need to demonstrate that:

- d. The facility is no longer needed in its current form;
- e. A replacement facility of sufficient size, layout and quality is to be provided on an alternative suitable location; or
- f. It would not be economically viable or feasible to retain the facility and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative community use of the land or building.

#### **Allotments**

- 5.12 There are three allotments in the plan area at Belle Vue, Killinghall Row and Sadberge Road, all are located within accessible locations in the heart of the local community. The allotments are valued by allotment holders and their families. They provide significant physical and mental health benefits as well as the provision of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Allotments are also part of the green infrastructure of the area. Policy MSG14 seeks to ensure that existing allotments are protected, which will assist with the delivery of plan objective 1 and 2.

#### **Policy MSG14: Allotments**

The following allotment sites, as defined on the policies map, will be protected from development:

- A1 Belle Vue;
- A2 Killinghall Row; and
- A3 Sadberge Road.

Development resulting in the loss of any of the allotment sites identified would only be supported where:

- a. The development provides significant social and, or economic benefits which outweigh the importance of retaining the allotment; and
- b. A replacement allotment of at least equivalent quality and quantity, in a convenient location for the users, is provided fit for use, prior to the loss of the allotment land or any part of it.

The provision of new allotments will be supported to meet locally identified demand.

### **Infrastructure**

- 5.13 The infrastructure requirements of new development will vary depending on the type, scale and nature of the proposals. It could include the provision of: open space, public transport, education, leisure and medical facilities. The parish council has particular concern over the impact of traffic within the area which is causing highway safety issues and congestion, most notably as a result of the width of the roads and their ability to cope with increasing traffic levels, this is made worse as a result of inappropriate parking. The community have expressed concern over the access to the GP surgery since it moved from its previous central location.
- 5.14 Policy MSG15 therefore seeks to ensure that no significant adverse infrastructure impacts arise as a result of new developments, supporting the delivery of all of the plan objectives.

#### **Policy MSG15: Infrastructure**

New developments will be required to provide or contribute to the infrastructure requirements that are related to them. The necessary infrastructure, including improvements to existing infrastructure, should be made available to serve the development within an agreed timescale.

## 6. Local economy

### Background

- 6.1 National policy requires significant weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Plan objective 3 seeks to support the economy of the plan area, particularly small-scale enterprises.

### Employment and economic growth

- 6.2 The economy of the plan area grew around its links to the railway and the ironworks. There were a number of factories, which have now gone. As a result, most residents have to travel elsewhere to access employment. The 2011 census identifies that most residents were employed in human health and social work activities (15%), followed by wholesale and retail trade (14%), education (10%), manufacturing (10%) and public administration (9%). In addition, those living in the parish are highly qualified, with 34% having level 4 qualifications and above. There is also a high level of self-employment in the parish (13%).
- 6.3 Policy MSG16 therefore seeks to support development proposals that result in the creation or protection of jobs and the sustainable economic growth of the plan area, assisting with the delivery of plan objective 3.

#### Policy MSG16: Employment and economic growth

Development proposals that support the creation or protection of job opportunities and the sustainable development and economic growth of the neighbourhood plan area will be supported where they comply with the relevant policies in the development plan and they can be achieved without significant impact on the built and natural environment and residential amenity.

### Tourism and leisure

- 6.4 Despite the historic and natural assets of the plan area, there is little tourism development. However, the parish council are keen to support appropriate facilities to develop the tourism and leisure industry within the plan area. The parish council, as part of their involvement in the Stockton and Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone working group, particularly support tourism and leisure proposals linked to the railway to help realise its potential to become a major heritage attraction and visitor destination.
- 6.5 Policy MSG17 therefore seeks to support proposals which support tourism and leisure development whilst balancing this against the need to protect and enhance the distinctive and valued environment, supporting the delivery of plan objective 3.

#### Policy MSG17: Tourism and leisure

The development of new visitor attractions and leisure facilities, including the expansion of existing tourism and leisure businesses should be focused in the settlement boundaries of Middleton St George, Middleton One Row or Oak Tree and will be supported where:

- a. The siting, scale, materials and design respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets;
- b. The proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on amenity of adjacent uses; and
- c. The proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

In the open countryside, away from the settlements, tourist attractions and leisure facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposed location is required to meet the needs of the business.

Tourism development proposed as part of a farm diversification scheme should ensure that the primary agricultural function of the farm is retained.

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## 7. Connectivity

### Background

- 7.1 The NPPF encourages a reduction in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions through the introduction of measures which promote a decrease in the number of journeys made by car. Whilst the preparation of transport policy at a local level is primarily a matter for the local planning authority, there are a wide range of areas where the plan can have an influence on accessibility including supporting the protection and enhancement of active travel routes and accessibility in new development.
- 7.2 Plan objective 4 therefore seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport, to connect local communities to the services and facilities they require, whilst ensuring the environmental quality of the plan area is protected by effectively managing traffic.

### Transport and new development

- 7.3 The NPPF identifies that planning policies should support a range of transport modes, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport as well as consideration of disabled access. Policy MSG18 therefore identifies the key considerations for development proposals across the plan area which will assist in the delivery of plan objective 4.

#### Policy MSG18: Transport and new development

Development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development:

- a. Will provide safe vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access;
- b. Will not significantly impact on traffic flows on the highway network or that appropriate mitigation measures can be secured and are undertaken; and
- c. Makes satisfactory off-road parking provision.

### Active travel routes

- 7.4 Active travel routes are those routes that are used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders. They provide recreation and leisure opportunities and also promote healthy living. Routes can include established pathways and cycle routes, public rights of way, bridle paths and paths of a more informal nature.
- 7.5 Policy MSG19 seeks to support proposals to improve or extend the walking and cycling network within the plan area, as well as protecting existing routes, supporting the delivery of plan objective 4.

#### Policy MSG19: Active travel

Proposals to improve or extend the walking and cycling network within the plan area will be supported. The active travel routes identified on the policies map will be protected from development, unless it provides:

- a. Significant social and/ or economic benefits, which outweigh the importance of the active travel network; and
- b. Replacement walking and cycling infrastructure.

## **Annex 1: Community actions**

As part of the process of developing the neighbourhood plan, some areas of community concerns were identified that cannot be addressed through the planning system. However, as part of the neighbourhood planning process they can become 'community actions', which are supported by Middleton St George Parish Council. These proposals can be delivered in conjunction with other local organisations.

### **Community action 1: Highway safety and traffic management**

To work with Darlington Borough Council to implement measures which improve the safety of the highway network across the plan area. Particularly: opening up the three way junction and improved lighting at High Scroggs Farm and railway bridge at Yarm Road which are linked to recent planning approvals. In order to monitor the highway network in the future the parish council will seek to purchase an additional traffic monitor.

### **Community action 2: Integrated approach to bus service provision**

To work with Darlington Borough Council, transport providers and other stakeholders such as Age UK, to seek to develop innovative schemes which improve accessibility to key services and facilities. Particularly, increasing the frequency of bus services to key locations, such as the GP surgery.

### **Community action 3: Play area improvements**

To explore options for improvements to the current play area, including installation of equipment that can be used by people with disabilities, new seating, surface improvements and new lighting/cameras.

### **Community action 4: Dog fouling**

Work with Darlington Borough Council to better control dog fouling across the plan area, including awareness raising, increasing bin provision and increasing patrols.

### **Community action 5: Wildflower meadow**

The parish council will explore options to create a wildflower meadow along Sadberge Road, next to the allotments.

### **Community action 6: Footpaths**

Work with Darlington Borough Council to deliver improvements to footpaths at Sadberge Road and Belle Vue allotments and also the creation of a new lit footpath from the entrance to the airport on the A67, parallel to The Whinnies Nature Reserve.

**Community action 7: Road improvements**

The parish council will explore options to make improvements to the unadopted road leading to the cricket club from Station Road

**Community action 8: Water park improvements**

The parish council will explore options to: make improvements to street lighting (to provide lighting as far as the boating club building); clear undergrowth on the reservoir banks, following the structural survey of the three ponds; extend and improve the trails; resurface the road from the entrance to the community centre car park and to the boating club; and improve external security/lighting for the parish council building.

**Community action 9: Stockton and Darlington Railway**

The parish council will contribute to the delivery of the Heritage Action Zone programme to develop the route of the former Stockton and Darlington Railway line into a green corridor and improving the footpaths to ensure it can be used throughout the year.

**Community action 10: Interpretation boards**

The parish council will explore options to install information boards at key parts of the parish, including: The Water Park; The Front at Middleton One Row; and along the route of the former Stockton and Darlington Railway line.

**Community action 11: Overhead cables**

Work with Darlington Borough Council to see the removal of overhead cables throughout the village.

**Community action 12: Facilities for young people**

The parish council will explore options to provide more facilities for young people, including the creation of a bike track/ trail.

**Community action 13: Facilities for older people**

The parish council will explore options to provide more facilities for older people.

**Community action 13: Improvements to the multi-use games area**

The parish council will explore options to make improvements to the multi-use games area, including installation of sensitive lighting and security measures. Hold discussions with Middleton Rangers Junior Football Club, Darlington Borough Council and Durham Football Association.

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## Annex 2: Design Codes

# 5.0 DESIGN CODES

### 5.1. Introduction

The distinguishing features of design codes in this report can be described as follows. (adapted from Preparing Design Codes, CABE 2016):

- *They are set of graphic, and to a lesser extent, written, rules that are technical in nature;*
- *They establish with precision the design considerations of a development or area;*
- *They are based on a design vision such as a masterplan or other form of design framework for a site or area;*
- *They are three dimensional in scope, and focus primarily on urban design considerations;*
- *They focus on the essential and mandatory design characteristics of a particular development; and*
- *They can also include provisions which are advisory or optional.*

Due to the non-site specific nature of these codes, a general written code form that can be applied to existing and new development is highly appropriate for this circumstance.

### 5.2 The National Design Guide

The National Design Guide is now available and together with Building For Life 12 provides an excellent set of tools to guide projects from the strategic through to the detail. The topics in this Design Code are mapped against it below and further detail to refer to is available here.

#### The Rules of Assembly and Character Response

Across the whole village area we have determined some key 'rules of assembly' for how to build in context and also positive and negative spatial characteristics that will be helpful in generating locally distinctive and contextually sensitive development.

As such the Codes propose how development must integrate generally in both spatial terms but also in character terms, focussing on the sense of place in the three sub-settlements. As such the codes are not site specific and they refer to a variety of different situations, including potential infill and extensions to the village areas.

### The Design Codes (DC)

DC.1 All of the following codes must be taken into consideration in the development of design proposals. The codes are not intended to stifle designers' creativity and cannot cover all circumstances and potential responses and therefore departures or exceptions will be required to be justified in line with the spirit of the code and resolved via consultation.

#### Community Consultation (CC)

CC.1 Consultation with the community and regular communication and liaison with community groups must form a key part of the design process from an early stage through to submissions.

#### Building for Life 12 and National Design Guide Statement

SS.1 Major Developments must provide both an ongoing/ updated Building for Life 12 Assessment and a statement to show how each of the National Design Guide topics has or will be taken into account within the design process.

Distinctly Darlington (2009) Characterisation Criteria	National Design Guide topics	IDENTITY
CONTEXT	CONTEXT	
LANDSCAPE	NATURE	
SPACE + MOVEMENT	MOVEMENT / PUBLIC SPACES	
GRAIN + DENSITY	BUILT FORM	
HEIGHT + SKYLINE	BUILT FORM	
MASSING + ROOFSCAPE	BUILT FORM	
MATERIALS	HOMES AND BUILDINGS	
DETAILS	HOMES AND BUILDINGS	
• See National Design Guide	USES	
• See National Design Guide	LIFESPAN	
• See National Design Guide	RESOURCES	

Figure 14: Table comparing Distinctly Darlington (2009) characterisation criteria to the National Design Guide (2018) topics

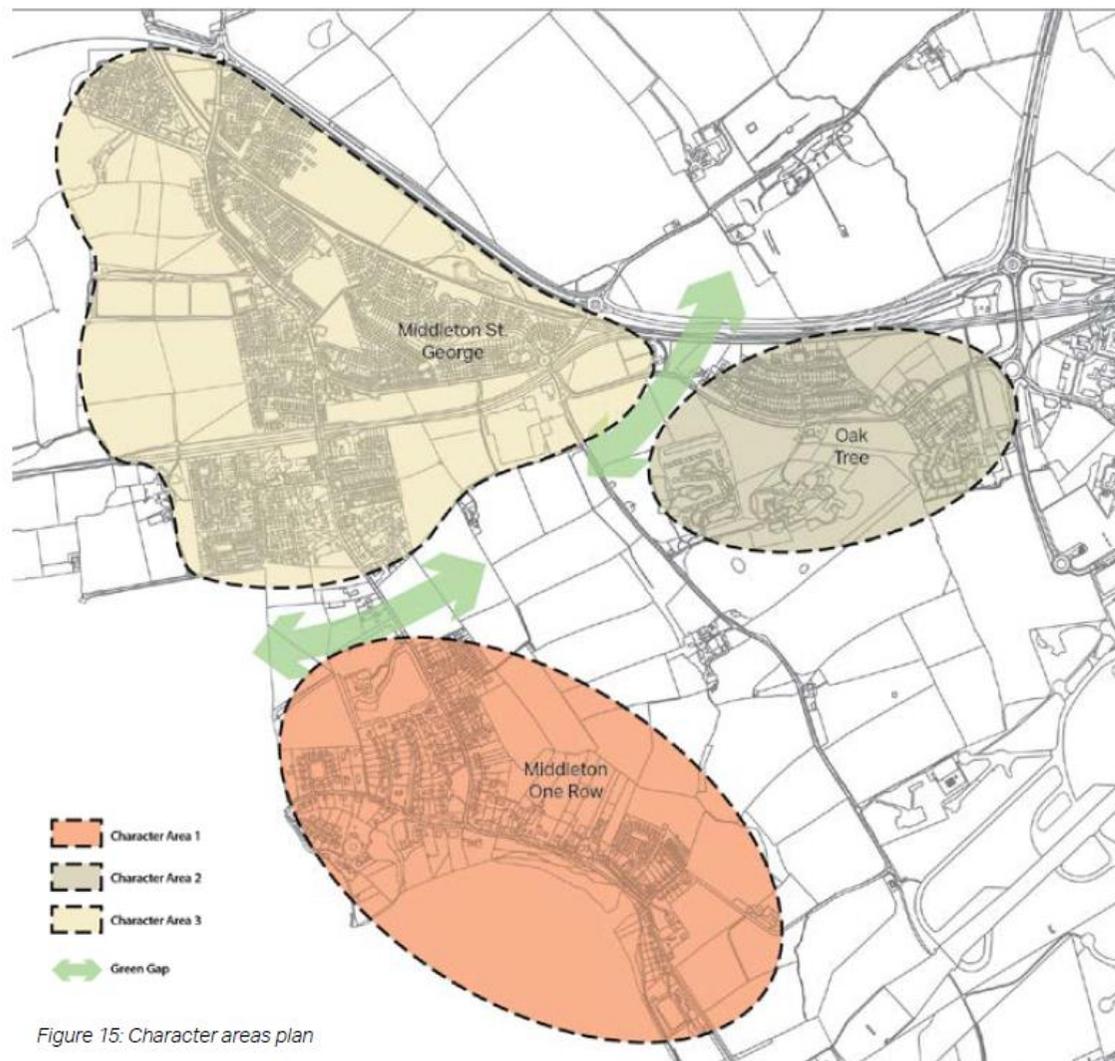


Figure 15: Character areas plan

# CONTEXT (C)

## C.1 Mitigate Air Quality and Noise issues

Mitigate the potential negative issues associated with bypass traffic, including noise and air quality to the north through building frontage, garden orientation and envelope design.

## C.2 Retain Green Gap 1

Maintain a Green Gap between Middleton St. George and Oak Tree to the east in order to preserve the distinct identity and sense of place whilst integrating them through ease of movement and connectivity in all of its many senses.

## C.3 Retain Green Gap 2

Maintain a Green Gap between Middleton St. George and Middleton One Row to the south for the same reasons as the above but with the added imperative of protecting and enhancing the significance of the conservation area.



C2 Green Gaps between settlements

## C.4 Response to Landscape Character

Respond to the landscape character adjacent to the villages, which is predominantly Middleton Farmland on most sides which can be used as a design cue for facing development. Likewise at One Row then the southern edge must be informed by the River Tees Valley landscape.

## C.5 Operational safety of Tees Valley Airport

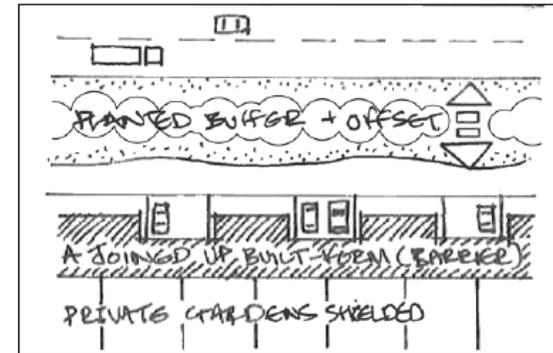
Development must not affect the operation and safety of the Tees Valley airport through reflectivity, lighting, protrusion or any other material way.

## C.6 Reference Parish history

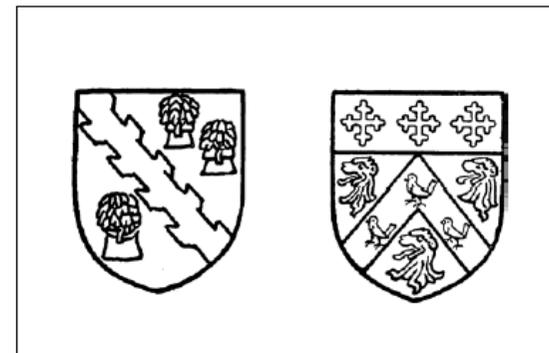
Enhance the appreciation and understanding of local history, strengthening and opening up further opportunities to create and display local identity by design. Public art, signage and interpretative material must all be explored.



C3 Green Gaps between settlements



C.1 Mitigate potential air quality and noise issues



C.6 Insignia: Reference Parish history

# LANDSCAPE (L)

## L.1 Landscape structure

Development must respond to the pattern of field enclosure, hedgerow and other landscape features adjacent to the village. Often this will tie in with the drainage patterns, topography and public rights of way which can structure development and provide green breaks leading into and around the village.

## L.2 Views and vistas

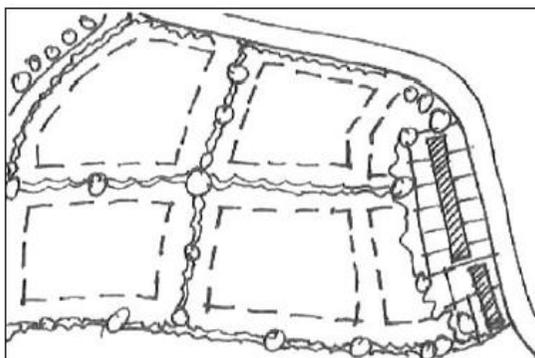
Development must retain identified views and vistas to the surrounding landscape. These may be modified to extend street but the principle should be to retain a view at the end of a street that already has one or keep a close sense of connection to the countryside. If development covers a green field site then a clear and legible green route (see also L.5) should be provided out.

## L.3 Topography

Development must respond to the natural form of topography. For example, streets and buildings must be oriented to run either with the contours (along the slope) or against the slope, i.e. uphill (give or take 30° each way).

## L.4 Access to the countryside

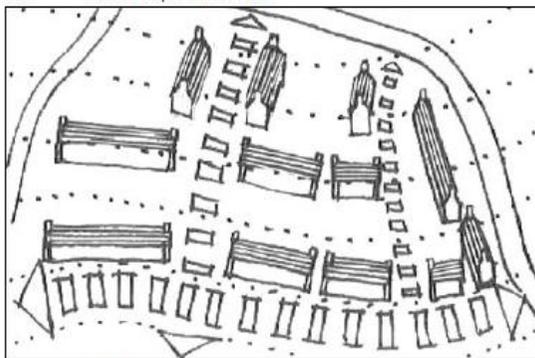
Access to the countryside must be maintained and legible via green and pleasant routes where it exists currently or where there is opportunity to create one (see also L.2). Green routes should be a minimum of 6-12m landscape corridor not including built development except multi-paths.



L.1 Landscape structure



L.2 Views and vistas - see page 9 for views in context



L.3 Topography



L.4 Access to the countryside - Thorntree Gardens

**L.5 Multi-functional green network**

Green spaces, landscape features and planting must be linked to form multi-functional green network for ecological connectivity and recreation. Links can be delivered in a variety of forms and at a variety of scales but must connect in order to serve any ecological needs such as bat and mouse foraging routes.

**L.6 Community Forest**

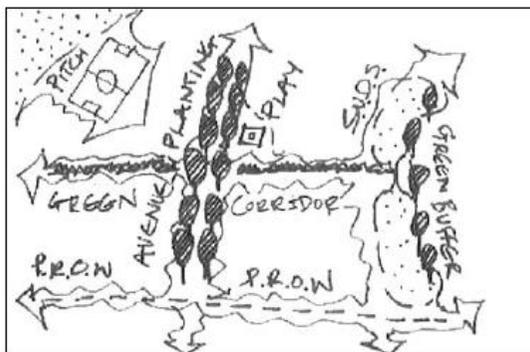
Locate opportunities to plant new woodland within major development based on the non-statutory land based designation of Community Forest. This can help to return the area to a pre-agrarian level of tree cover and biodiversity.

**L.7 Landscape Character design response**

Transform an understanding of landscape character into locally distinctive design. For example, woodland can inform the character of development both in a relational sense (the setting) or by designing a local woodland-housing typology.

**L.8 Trees a Focal Points**

Trees should be planted as a way to generate a sense of place in new development over the longer term, for example a single mature tree, not overpowered by an over-engineered road layout can form a key focal point.



L.5 Multi-functional green network



L.6 Community Forest



L.7 Landscape Character design response



L.8 Trees a Focal Points

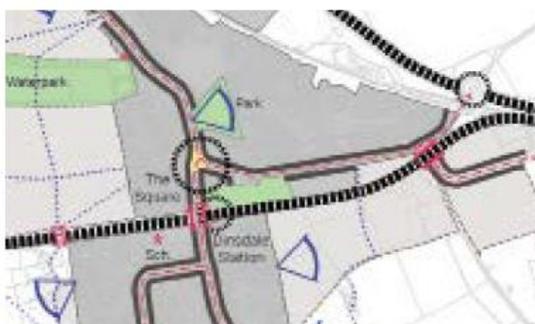
# SPACE + MOVEMENT (S/M)

## S1. Main streets / main frontage enclosure

The main frontages follow the main village streets (see diagrams) and have the most bearing on perceived character of the village to people moving within or through. Development sites which include a main frontage must provide an attractive built-frontage to give enclosure to streets as is typically found, ie. close to the back of pavement. Where buildings are set back further (max. 10m) boundary treatments will be critical to maintaining a joined-up front.

### Negative examples:

- *Garages or parking courts must not form the frontage along main streets; parking to the front of homes is prohibited on these streets unless within a walled courtyard with gates / piers or already existing;*
- *Single-storey dwellings must not be positioned along these streets as these do not provide sufficient enclosure (over the longer term single storey dwellings along main streets should be development options);*
- *Rear plot boundaries must not face onto these streets and if they do so boundaries must not be simply closed board timber fence or any type of security fencing. Extensive blank facades will not be allowed.*



S.1 Main streets / frontages - see page 11 for full diagram



**X** Poor enclosure - parking court facing Station Road (main street) with single storey dwellings



**X** Poor built-form frontage: single storey dwellings facing main street (Yarm Road)



**✓** Well-detailed boundary fence with brick piers

**Positive examples:**

- *Two and occasional three-storey buildings must face the main streets to provide proper enclosure and a joined up built form is also required;*
- *Terraced, semi-detached and detached buildings must face these streets and furthermore be attached via walls or built boundaries;*
- *Buildings must create a rhythm to the street front that is human in scale and wider buildings broken down into segments to add interest.*
- *Buildings must be set close to the back of pavement or with small front gardens (max. 10m) and where set back include boundary treatments.*



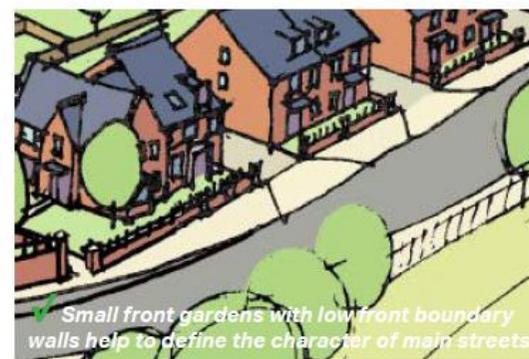
*A joined-up built form of mainly two storey dwellings along the Station Road (St George)*



*Marker building on the main frontage along The Front (One Row)*



*Buildings must create a rhythm to the street front that is human in scale*



*Small front gardens with low front boundary walls help to define the character of main streets*

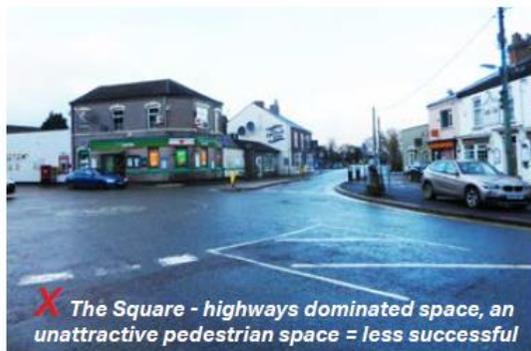
S2. Key Nodes and Minor Nodes

Nodes are spaces where main routes come together and have significance, above simple a junction. They are a major focus for identity within the village, often attracting the main local services and extra expenditure on the public realm.

Development on the main nodes should aim to reinforce the identity of the village through the design of the public realm and possibly public art. They are important points for wayfinding and legibility also, as well as meeting places and resting places. They should attract and advertise the village to those passing through and serve the needs of residents.

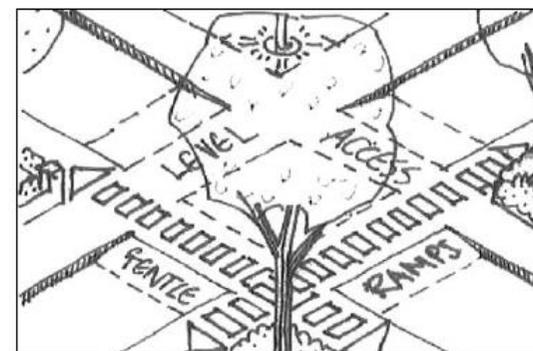
**Negative examples:**

- *Highways infrastructure and associated signage / street furniture must not dominate these spaces, a comfortable and attractive place identity is key in these spaces which must be a focus for village life / services;*
- *Turning circles and vehicle tracking must be demonstrated to reduce space allocated to vehicles and so reduce traffic speeds alongside;*
- *Shared space design must not impair the ability of guide dogs to navigate safely around the public realm (60mm kerb minimum).*



**X The Square - highways dominated space, an unattractive pedestrian space = less successful**

S2. Key Nodes and Minor Nodes - The Square



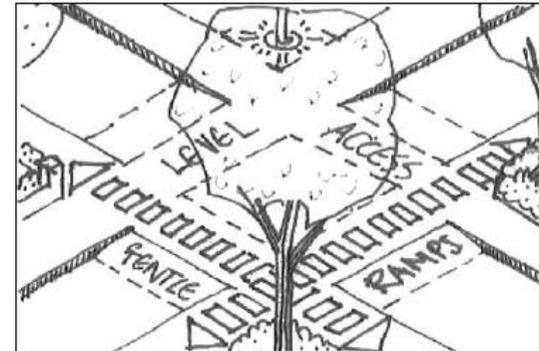
**✓ Poynton - high quality public realm design encourages pedestrian activity and calms traffic**

S2. Key Nodes and Minor Nodes - Poynton precedent



**Positive examples:**

- Public space should be rebalanced for pedestrian/ wheelchair users and comfortable bicycle/mobility scooter movement over vehicles;
- Street design should produce informal, intimate village spaces for all, where people can rest, interact and enjoy watching the world go by.
- Provide spill out space (for cafes and shops) and street furniture for rest to enable a range of social activity to occur in the public realm.



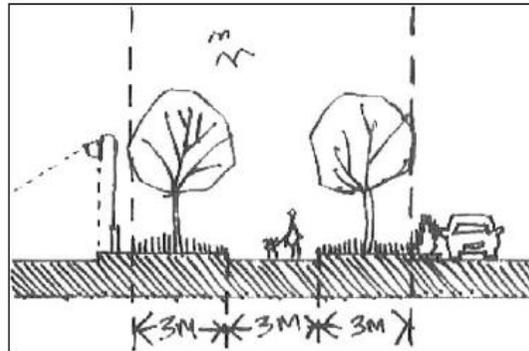
**M1. Level access**

All streets must be improved for pedestrians/ wheelchair users and for comfortable bicycle/ mobility scooter movement alongside vehicles and particularly at junctions and crossings where raised tables are beneficial.

M1 Level access

**M2. Public Rights of Way in new development**

Where new development runs alongside a Public Right of Way then it must be incorporated within a generous landscape corridor to maintain legible links to the countryside and retain the amenity and enjoyment of the existing PRoW.



M2. Public Rights of Way incorporated in Green Corridor

**M3. Street type and hierarchy**

New street design must integrate with the existing hierarchy and will generally provide lower order, intimate streets for the purposes of residential access.



M3. Extract of route hierarchy - see page 11 for full diagram

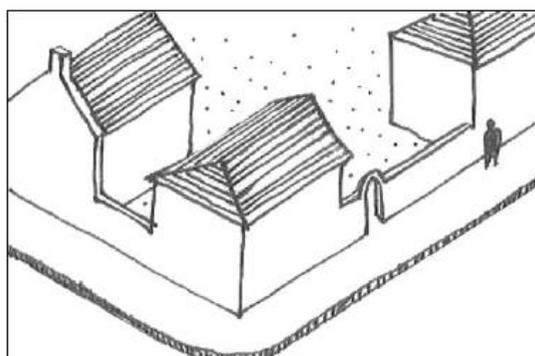
# GRAIN + DENSITY (G/D)

## G.1 Variety in plot sizes

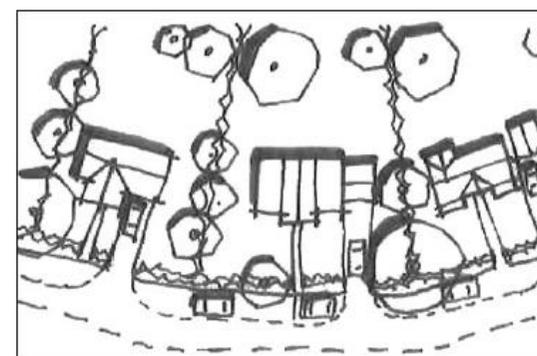
Plot and garden sizes should vary with building sizes. Likewise gaps between buildings should vary depending on building type and size. This is a very basic lesson of setting out residential areas with character and 'not just another estate', too often perceived as cramming housing on a site with no appreciation for the setting. Putting houses close together or joining them is not a bad thing in itself but it is more complex than that to make a street with character.

### Positive examples:

- *The villa types typically found in Oak Tree have a plot that is larger and this allows the landscape to show through, providing a setting to the building and a character context to the neighbourhood based on it;*
- *The narrow plots of the joined-up terraces along the main streets in Middleton St. George give a strong level of definition to the street and therefore a more enclosed village setting that has its own character;*
- *The Virginia estate has relatively wide plots with front gardens and verges which alter the setting, providing green, spacious streets but can be car dominated.*



G.1 Variety in plot sizes - Joined up built-form



G.1 Variety in plot sizes - Larger villas set within landscaping



✓ Small setback on terraced street (strong enclosure)



✗ Close set detached houses appear cramped

**G.2 Variety in Building Types**

Terraces, semi-detached and detached houses should be used in carefully considered combinations and places to create a considered, joined-up street scene and reinforce character without creating mono-cultures of single types. For example; detached houses make good header buildings that terminate a street vista; pairs of semi-detached can create a more formal rhythm and a terraced row can help create a more enclosed intimate street or courtyard.

**G.3 Building footprints**

Building footprints must typically be residential in scale but varied in size to help create diverse new developments that serve a range of housing needs.

**D1. Density ranges**

The density of any major development must respond to the existing ranges identified for each of the sub-settlements, compliant with policy minimum;

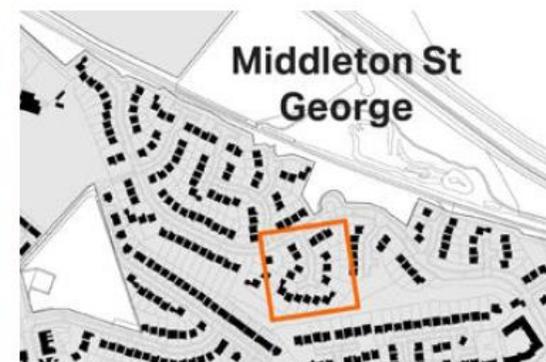
- Middleton St. George: up to 40 Dwellings per Hectare;
- Oak Tree: up to 25 Dwellings per Hectare;
- One Row; Up to 25 Dwellings per Hectare;

**D2. Density Setting**

The density of development must consider the adjacent development that it shares boundaries and/ or frontage onto the public realm with so as not to overwhelm or underwhelm, whilst also complementing the street scene.



G.2 Building types variety



D.1 Building types variety



# HEIGHT + SKYLINE (H/S)

## H.1 Storey Heights

Storey heights should be between 1.5 - 2.5 storeys where half-storeys must be in the roofspace. 'Single-storey' dwellings must either have rooms in the roofspace or potential for conversion. 3 storey buildings will be exceptions for example in the local centre where there may be alternative ground floor uses.

## S1. Breaking the Skyline

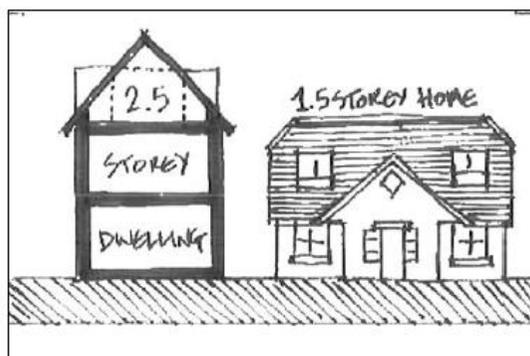
Only special buildings (ie. community, institutional or other distinct uses for the benefit of the wider community) should penetrate the typical skyline and be of sufficient architectural merit to warrant the exceptional circumstance.

## S2. Heights Variation

Adjacent buildings should not vary in height by more than a half storey (max. 2m between eaves heights) in new development, also where development continues from existing buildings.

## S.3 Vistas and horizons

Views to the countryside from from development streets should not be closed off but retained to keep the sense of connection. Retaining paddocks for this purpose can help create a semi-rural feel. Where new development extends it should aim to keep these view corridors or meet existing homes with an open green space to reduce loss of amenity.



H.1 Storey Heights



S.2 Breaking the Skyline - St. Laurence, One Row



S.2 Heights variation



S.3 Vistas and horizons - Chapel Street view out to a site that has planning permission for 330 houses

# MASSING + ROOFSCAPE (Ma/R)

## Ma.1 Context

New residential buildings should neither overwhelm nor underwhelm their neighbours in order that there is some continuity in frontage, scale and enclosure that does not compromise amenity on any side of the building.

## Ma.2 Massing

Similarly massing must relate to; the plot size; level of street hierarchy; sense of enclosure and importance of the building (following the street hierarchy is the starting point to understand this as we move from the more upright and enclosed main streets to the more low key and intimate minor street types.

## R.1 Roofscape

Roofscape must relate to each other in composition and take into account the gaps between buildings and level of formality that is to be achieved, e.g. a more formal uniform street such as the iron worker terraces or a high variation street such as Station Road. Generally informality will be the prevailing scene.



M1. These buildings are on the same main street (Yarm Road)



M2. Massing - good proportions in massing along The Front



R1. Roofscape - Station Road exhibits some gentle variety

# DETAILS + MATERIALS (D/M)

## D1. Boundary definition

Boundary treatments must be used to create clearly defined public/ private realm where buildings are set back from the pavement or has a front garden, in order to create some defensible space. Commercial uses are exceptional.

## D2. Choice of boundary treatments

Acceptable boundary treatments should draw on the existing area or for new development implement a consistent application based on street hierarchy and character; utilising low walls, hedges, railings and timber fences by area (see Table 2 over page for details and materials by area).

## D3. Boundary character

In all circumstances a front boundary treatment, either built- or landscaped, will be required to prevent the appearance of characterless suburban sprawl. The quality must be sufficient to complement the existing positive character.

### Negative examples:

- *Timber fencing on the Virginia estate is characteristic and somewhat charming as are open boundaries to gardens, over time as people are enclosing their front gardens they must continue to use timber fence not masonry in order to preserve the character and positive change.*
- *Station Road from Fighting Cocks to The Square is a mixed-bag for front boundaries and low brick walls must be the focus to improve.*



D.1 Boundaries definition

### Positive examples:

- *On the Yarm Road in Oak tree and cross-beam timber fence boundary treatments provide a rural charm based around the restored cottages;*
- *Very low walls/ stone kerbs (sometime with railings) define the private realm along The Front in One Row to good effect with minimal effort.*



D.2 Boundary character



D.3 Boundary character

M1. Follow the predominant building materials, use precedents to justify usage and give priority to following traditional and historic usage in application and detailing but not to the detriment of contemporary design which can actually be more authentic than copying the past and mimicking historic styles poorly.

M2. See Characterisation and the adjacent table for typical materials and details found within each area (this is by no means exhaustive and precedents that are in keeping with the historic character may be considered too).

M3. Select alternative complementary materials that add to the positive character of the area and create rich but harmonious street scenes without detracting from or overwhelming the existing core characteristics such brick or paint.

M4. Materials within and facing the public realm must be sufficiently robust and durable to give an impression of solidity and quality and not degrade easily, e.g. boundary treatments facing the public realm must not only consist of timber board fence except where the rural character justifies in Oak Tree.



Villages	Openings			Rooflines		Boundary treatment			Materials			
	Lintels	Soldier courses	Bay windows	Dormers	Parapet gables	Wall	Native Hedge	Railings	Timber cross-beam fence	Brick	Render	Paint / Whitewash
Middleton One Row	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Middleton St George	•		•	•		•	•			•	•	•
Oak Tree	•					•	•		•	•		



Figure 20: Table 2. Reflecting the individual design features in Middleton St. George's sub-settlements. The following design features will be appropriate to each (adapted from the Design of New Development, Supplementary Planning Document 2011, p.68)



**Overview of Traffic Situation**

**Report to Special Meeting of the Parish Council 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**MSGPC Traffic Survey (Neasham Road and Middleton Lane) January and February 2019**

Cllr Les Foggett produced a report based on traffic data downloaded from the Parish Council traffic monitor positioned at the junction of Neasham Road and Middleton Lane.

The report was going to be used in the Gladman Neasham Road Appeal, but was not submitted to the Planning Inspectorate because the Appellant withdrew from the Appeal early.

The report (attached) shows that data was collected over a period of 6 weeks (42 days)

Cumulative total across the 6 weeks	=	71,547
Divided by 42 (days)	=	1,703.5 vpd (vehicle movements per day)

**MSGPC Traffic Survey (Station Road) March and April 2019**

Cllr Les Foggett produced a report based on traffic data downloaded from the Parish Council traffic monitor positioned at St George's Gate, counting traffic along Station Road.

The report was going to be used at the Planning Applications Committee for the Station Road application (16/00976/OUT). Although the total vpd was mentioned in a letter to the Planning Applications Committee in advance of the meeting, the application was not considered as it was decided that this application should not be determined until after the adoption of the Local Plan.

The report (attached) shows that data was collected over a period of 6 weeks (42 days)

Cumulative total across the 6 weeks	=	70,788
Divided by 42 (days)	=	1,685.43 vpd (vehicle movements per day)

**Highways Officer Response to Gladman The Greenway application (19/00231/OUT) (pending determination)**

In his response (attached) he mentions the Transport Assessment (TA) peak hour trip rate, for 160m houses, forecasts a total of 238 vpd per day. However, this assessment is not based on what we would consider a more likely calculation of a 2 vehicle use per household per day. This would, instead, equate to 640 vpd (2 trips x 2 vehicles).

Add to this the 792 vpd from High Stell (198 houses) (2 trips x 2 vehicles).

The Highways Officer mentions that The Greenway currently has recorded traffic flows of around 600 vehicles per day (which, given the number of houses in The Greenway and Grendon Gardens, is more in line with our calculation methodology than that of any applicant's Transport Assessment methodology).

If we add the figures together:

Current from The Greenway and Grendon Gardens	=	600 vpd
Likely from High Stell (198)	=	792 vpd
Likely from Gladman The Greenway (160)	=	640 vpd
<b>Total</b>	=	<b>2,032 vpd</b>

The Highway Officer Quotes the Manual for Streets (MfS) (p.96), referring to correlation with accident data, or lack of serious accidents, on vpd of between 600 to 23,000. The MfS even goes on to say that the average should be 10,000 rather than 4,000 for a similar 30mph road.

In his response dated 11/06/2019, he concludes by stating:

*Whilst I have raised numerous concerns with the application, and would not necessarily recommend the existing estate roads of The Greenway and Grendon Gardens as being suitable for such an intensification of use, they do largely meet nationally recognised design standards and would as such be difficult to refuse on highway grounds, there are however issues of residential amenity and difficulties in how the build phase can be managed for construction traffic within an established estate.*

The Highway Officer is recommending a Road Safety Audit as a Condition.

Environmental Health Officer Response to Gladman The Greenway application (19/00231/OUT) (pending determination)

In his response dated 29/05/2019 (attached), he mentions the impact of noise on residents, and recommends:  
*...that the application is refused on the grounds that permitting it would create an unacceptable adverse effect through excessive road traffic noise for the existing residents of The Greenway.*

Summary

- The traffic data collected by MSGPC clearly demonstrates that the current vehicle movements along a section of road from Neasham Road/Middleton Lane junction along Station Road to St George's Gate totals in excess of 70,000 over 6 weeks (approx.. 1,700 vpd).
- The recorded vpd along The Greenway is approx. 600 (Highway Officer, 11/06/2019)
- Although the 600 vpd along The Greenway will be included in the MSGPC traffic data, it can be added to the expected vpd from the High Stell and Gladman The Greenway developments  

<b>Total</b>	=	<b>2,032 vpd</b>
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- The Highway Officer has concerns about the suitability of the access roads
- The Environmental Officer recommends refusal of the Gladman application due to excessive traffic noise
- MSGPC has considered that both these developments, and their impacts, should be considered cumulatively

# **Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Settlement Boundary Background Paper**

**August 2020**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to explain the process which has led to the proposed designation of settlement boundaries around the villages of Middleton St George, Middleton One Row and Oak Tree in the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 As part of the consultation on the pre-submission draft neighbourhood plan, we are inviting comments on the proposed settlement boundaries. Comments will inform the proposed settlement boundaries. Comments can be made in the following ways:
- By email to: [msgclerk@aol.com](mailto:msgclerk@aol.com); or
  - By letter to: Middleton St George Parish Council, 5 Whitebridge Drive, Darlington, DL1 3TY.
- 1.3 Comments must be received by 12 noon on 10 November 2020.

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## 2. Background

### Settlement boundaries

- 2.1 A settlement boundary is a line that is drawn on a plan around a village, which reflects its built form, this is also known historically as a 'village envelope'. A settlement boundary is used as a policy tool reflecting the area where a set of plan policies are to be applied. The settlement boundary does not necessarily have to cover the full extent of a village or be limited to its built form. In general, there is a presumption in favour of development within the settlement boundary. Any land and buildings outside of the boundary line are usually considered to be open countryside, where development would be regulated with stricter planning policies. However, it should be noted that any land which has been included within the boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which will need to be adhered to also, for example; the protection of the character of a settlement.
- 2.2 Settlement boundaries have a number of advantages, they seek to:
- Ensure development is directed to more sustainable locations, both in terms of accessibility to and support of existing services and transport and in terms of landscape;
  - Protect the countryside from encroachment of land uses more characteristic of built up areas, which can help conserve and enhance cultural heritage and natural beauty;
  - Provide an easy to understand tool that gives certainty for landowners, developers and the community over where development is likely to be acceptable and where it is not;
  - Direct development to specific parts of the area and this can help increase the viability of local services, as well as encourage new ones to establish;
  - Ensure a plan-led and more managed approach to future development, providing a firm basis for protecting the countryside from unnecessary encroachment;
  - Support the presumption in favour of sustainable development of sites that are too small to be identified as formal allocations;
  - Make it easier for local residents to obtain planning permission for domestic outbuildings within a settlement boundary than outside;
  - Provide a guide for appropriate locations for rural exception sites to provide affordable housing for local needs (in locations adjoining and outside of the settlement policy boundary); and
  - Ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach.
- 2.3 However, there can also be some disadvantages of settlement boundaries:
- By restricting development, settlement boundaries can artificially increase land values within the settlement compared with land outside, as the likelihood of successfully gaining planning permission differs;
  - Artificially increase land values on land adjoining the settlement boundary due to future 'hope value', with landowners seeking the possibility of the boundary being realigned at some point in the future to accommodate future growth of the settlement. This could mean fewer rural exception sites coming forward, as the landowner may wish to take a longer-term view;
  - The general presumption that development within settlement boundaries is acceptable can result in pressure for the development of unsuitable land. This can result in pressure for the development of valued open spaces within settlement boundaries but where development may not be appropriate. Although, this can be overcome through ensuring that any open space valued by the community is protected through formal designation;

- The use of settlement boundaries can lead to the perception that they result in denser development in already well-developed settlements e.g. within the gardens of houses; and
- Settlement boundaries can be crude and inflexible. For small rural communities with a character of dispersed development, it can be difficult to draw a logical boundary around the village.

### **The Development Plan**

- 2.4 The Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan proposes a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundaries of the three settlements in the plan area: Middleton St George, Middleton One Row and Oak Tree.
- 2.5 The current Development Plan for the Plan area comprises the: Darlington Core Strategy (2011) and the saved policies of the Darlington Local Plan (1997). Local Plan policy E2 defines settlement limits for all three villages within the plan area and requires most new development to be located within settlements across the borough. Outside settlement boundaries, policy E2 restricts development to: agricultural or forestry operations; small scale development beneficial to the rural economy or the needs of rural communities; operational development; and countryside related sports or recreation activities.

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### 3. Settlement Boundary Methodology

- 3.1 As explained in section 1, the concept of settlement boundaries is to identify a policy line which separates built-up areas (within which development is, in principle, acceptable), from the countryside (within which, with limited exceptions, development is not acceptable).
- 3.2 There is a presumption in favour of development if land is within a settlement boundary and therefore land should only be included within the boundary if that is where development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other policies. There is a judgement to be made as to whether other development or areas adjacent to but outside the current settlement policy area relates more to the built environment than to the surrounding countryside.
- 3.3 There is no definitive methodology to establish settlement boundaries and different approaches have been taken by local planning authorities and neighbourhood plan groups across the country. This settlement boundary methodology for the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan, has been informed by a review of a number of different approaches and has been prepared in the context of the parish. It follows a five-stage process which is set out below.

#### Stage 1 – Desktop review:

This first stage involves a review of existing evidence documents, including:

- Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map (1997);
- Emerging Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map (2020);
- Darlington Landscape Character Assessment (2015);
- Middleton One Row Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2010);
- Darlington Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017-2018 (2018);
- Review of current planning applications/ permissions;
- Evidence base supporting the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan, such as the 'Design Principles' document prepared by AECOM; and
- Aerial mapping (Google Earth).

#### Stage 2 – Identification of a draft boundary and on-site review:

Following the desktop review, an initial draft boundary is identified which can then be viewed on site. In order to establish robust settlement boundaries for villages within the plan area there are a number of guiding principles:

- Where practical, the boundary should follow clearly defined physical features, such as walls, fences, hedgerows, roads and water courses;
- Areas to be included are:
  - Built development that visually forms part of the settlement;
  - Those with extant planning permissions for built development which is physically and functionally related to the villages;
  - Agricultural buildings if they are well related in terms of scale and positioning to the rest of the village;
  - Community facilities where they are within the built-up area;
- Areas to be excluded are:
  - Curtilages of properties which have the capacity to extend the built form of the settlement - including large residential gardens;
  - Recreational or amenity space at the edge of settlements which primarily relate to the countryside;
  - Allotments, unless within the built-up area;

- Isolated buildings, not well related to the settlement;
- Designated wildlife sites, unless within the built-up area;
- Woodlands, orchards and other community green spaces, including cemeteries and churchyards, unless within the built-up area;
- Car parks on the edge of settlements;
- Community facilities clearly outside the settlement e.g. pubs/ hotels.

**Stage 3 – Engagement:**

- Public feedback on the draft boundary as part of the consultation on the pre-submission draft plan.

**Stage 4 – Review:**

- Review of comments received and amendment where necessary.

**Stage 5 – Submission/ adoption:**

- Inclusion of proposed settlement boundaries within submission draft plan, if endorsed through examination and referendum, will be adopted as part of the neighbourhood plan.

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## 4. Desktop review – key findings

- 4.1 A number of key considerations were identified as part of the desktop review, these are set out below.

### Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map (1997)

- 4.2 Policy E2 of the Darlington Local Plan defines development limits for settlements across the Borough. The settlement boundaries for the three villages within the plan area are set out in figures 1 to 3.

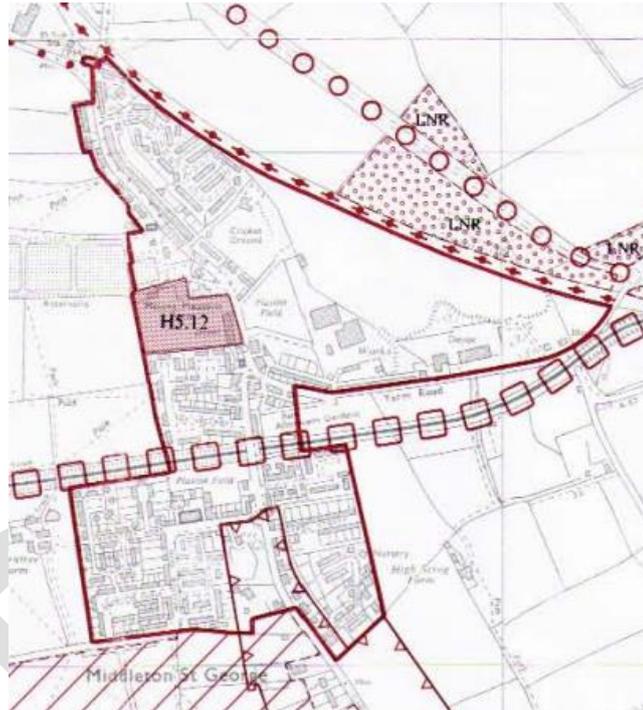


Figure 1: Extract from Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map – Middleton St George Settlement Boundary

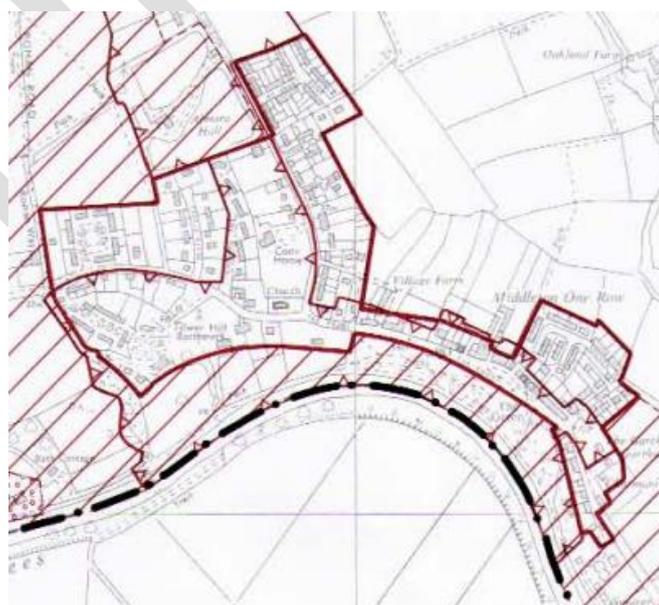


Figure 2: Extract from Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map – Middleton One Row Settlement Boundary



Figure 3: Extract from Darlington Local Plan Proposals Map - Oak Tree Settlement Boundary

Emerging Darlington Local Plan Policies Map (2020)

4.3 Policy H3 of the proposed submission Darlington Local Plan proposes changes to the settlement limits of Middleton St George. No changes are proposed to the boundary for Middleton One Row and the current Oak Tree settlement boundary is proposed to be removed. This is illustrated in figures 4-6 below.

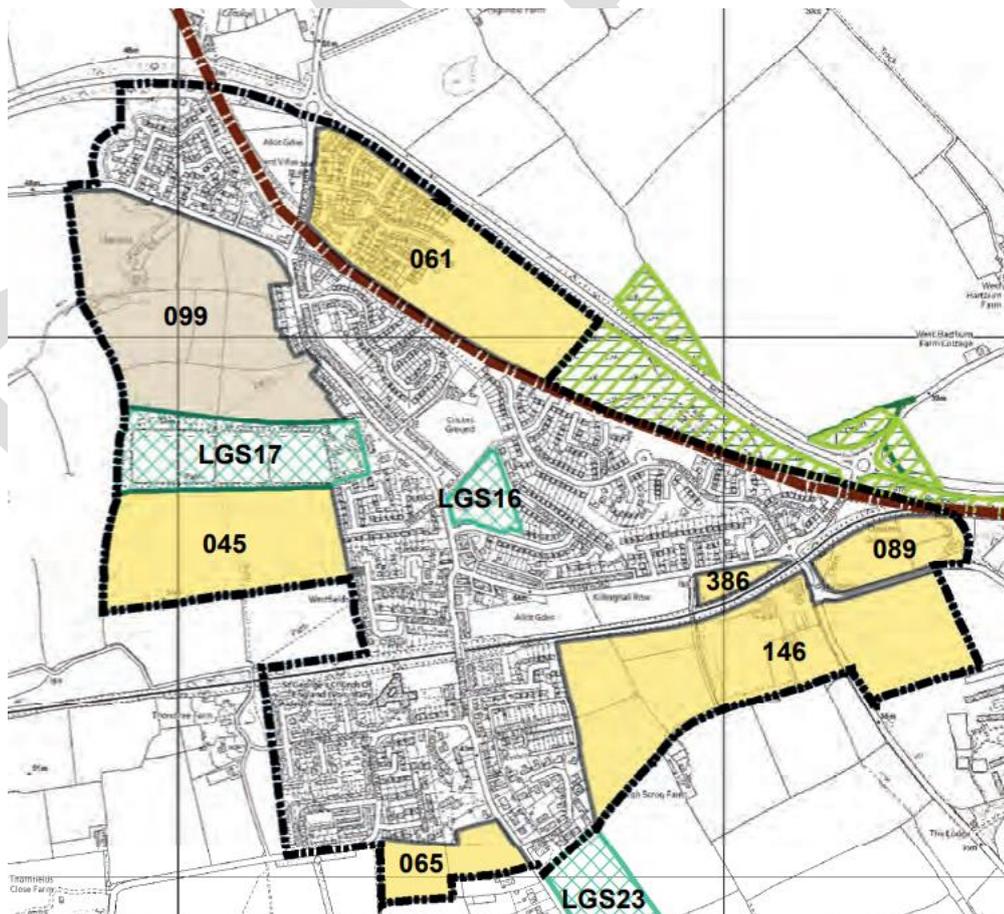


Figure 4: Extract from the draft Darlington Local Plan policies map - Middleton St George settlement boundary

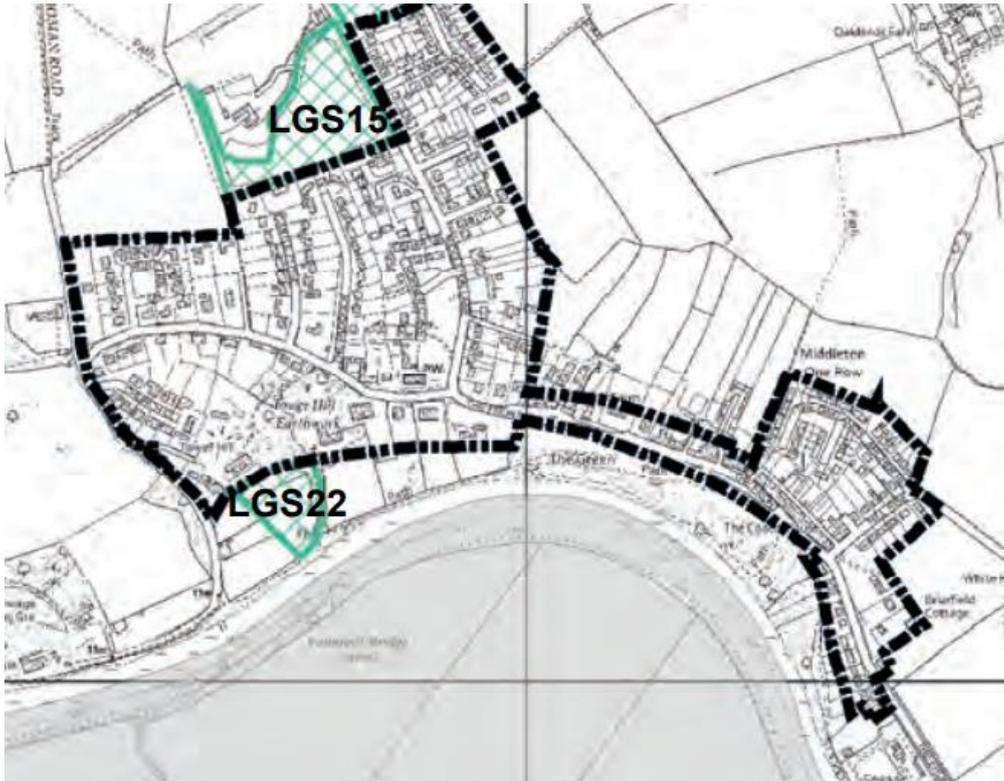


Figure 5: Extract from the draft Darlington Local Plan policies map - Middleton One Row settlement boundary



Figure 6: Extract from the draft Darlington Local Plan policies map - Oak Tree

#### Darlington Landscape Character Appraisal (2015)

- 4.4 The Landscape Character Appraisal considers landscape and visual sensitivity to built development highlighting the importance of the historic character and form of small villages within the character areas covered by the Plan. Therefore, there is a need to retain strong settlement boundaries to ensure that development which may affect this important landscape setting is carefully considered.

Middleton One Row Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2010)

- 4.5 The conservation character appraisal explains that the Middleton One Row Conservation Area was designated for the following reasons:

*'Middleton One Row commands sweeping views over open country from its dramatic position nearly one hundred feet up the steep wooded bank of the Tees. Though not the only village in the county having a single-side street which takes advantage of riverside views, it is the grandest and most spacious example. It became modestly fashionable when a spa opened at Dinsdale in the late eighteenth century, though with a few exceptions the architecture does not reflect this, being later and humbler than Regency. A Roman road crossed the river to the west of the village and the Tower Hill earthwork is believed to be part of the crossing's defence works. Brick and slate predominate as building materials but with a good proportion of render and pantiles.'*

- 4.6 The statement of special interest explains that the landscape setting of the conservation area has a major impact on the character of the area. This includes open countryside, mature tree cover, private gardens and the greenery surrounding the River Tees. The character appraisal describes the problems, pressures and capacity for change within the conservation area. It highlights the importance of the green spaces within the village and well as the adjacent countryside.

Darlington Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (2018)

- 4.7 There are 15 sites contained within the Darlington HELAA that are relevant to the consideration of the identification of settlement boundaries for the villages within the plan area:

- 045 – High Stell;
- 065 – Land between Middleton Lane and Neasham Road;
- 067 – East of Middleton Lane, MSG;
- 089 – Land West of Oak Tce, MSG;
- 099 – Maxgate Farm, MSG;
- 108 – Oak Tree Farm, Yarm Road, MSG;
- 146 – Land south of railway, MSG;
- 230 – Land between Yarm Road and railway line west, MSG;
- 309 – North of Hunters Green, MSG;
- 373 – Land south of Neasham Road, MSG;
- 374 – Land south of Thorntree Farm, MSG;
- 375 – Land south of High Stell, MSG;
- 384 – Oak Tree, MSG;
- 386 – Land between Yarm Road and railway line east, MSG;
- 388 – South of Neasham Road (extended).

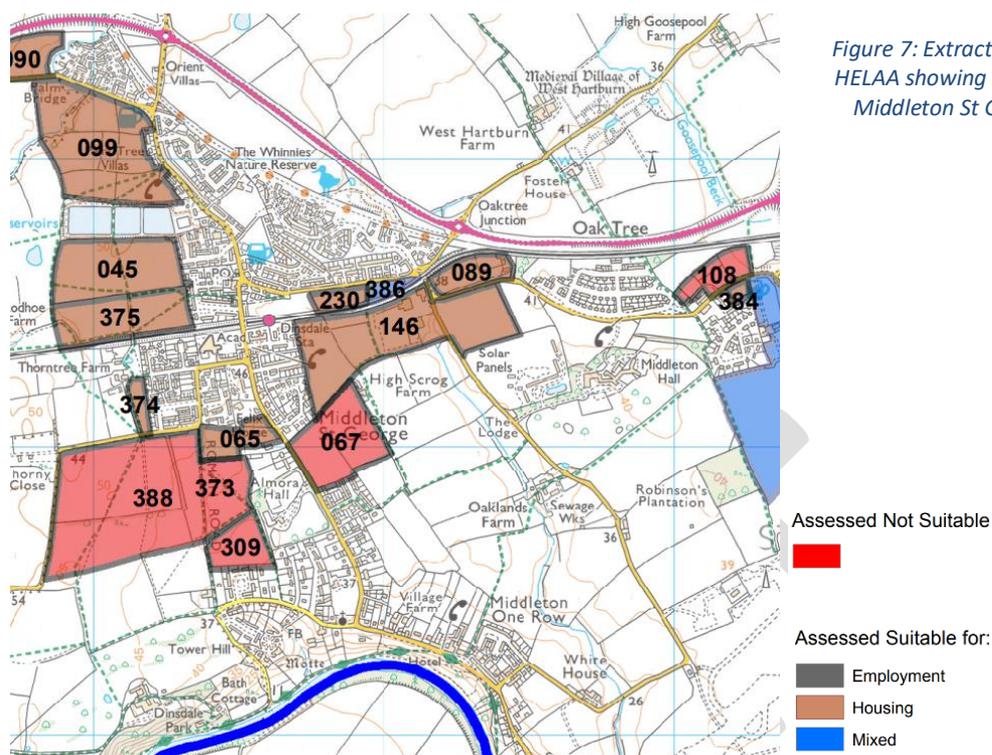


Figure 7: Extract from Darlington HELAA showing sites adjacent to Middleton St George villages

- 4.8 The parish council agree with Darlington Borough Council’s (DBC) published assessment of sites 067, 108, 309, 373 and 388 that the sites are not suitable for housing and therefore should not form part of the settlement boundaries.
- 4.9 It is noted that a number of the site have planning permission: 045; 065; 089; 146; 230; 384; and 386. Planning applications are currently pending consideration for sites: 099 and 375.
- 4.10 The parish council does not consider sites 099 and 375 are suitable for development. Site 099 has a number of constraints, including: access, flooding, infrastructure capacity and impact on historic assets (namely the Cades Roman Road). Highway’s England objected to the proposed site allocation within the emerging local plan as a result of potential impacts on the strategic road network.
- 4.11 With regard to site 375, it should be noted that officers within DBCs policy team are recommending that the site should not now be allocated for housing development as they consider there are issues with access and amenity, which they are not convinced can be overcome. In addition, Highway’s England objected to the proposed housing allocation within the emerging local plan.
- 4.12 Previous parish council responses to the pending application for the development of site 375 illustrate that there are significant access and highway infrastructure capacity issues. The proposed access to the site is not within the same ownership and would only be able to be provided at this point if number 20A The Greenway was purchased and demolished. It is also considered that the proposed access route does not and could not meet the councils highway standards in terms of width of road to be provided and the provision of the required footpaths. Traffic survey data illustrates that the development of the site could cause result in significant highway safety issues.

- 4.13 The site has archaeological constraints as a result of its relationship with the Roman (Cade's) Road. In addition, the development of the site is likely to impact on the character of the historic village of Middleton St George. As a result of the deliverability and suitability issues, the sites are therefore not considered appropriate for inclusion within the settlement boundary and should therefore be discounted.
- 4.14 Site 374 is are considered suitable by the DBC but there are no planning permission in place. Site 374 lies on the edge of the built up area and is rural in nature.

Middleton St George Design Guide (April 2020)

- 4.15 As part of the government's support programme for neighbourhood planning, the parish council commissioned AECOM to prepare a design guide to inform the work on the plan. The design guide describes the growth of the parish, landscape character, importance of green spaces, as well as statutory and non-statutory designations. The gaps between the settlements and glimpses of views into the countryside are identified as important. This is recognised within the design vision, which states 'the three sub-settlements will remain separated by green gaps and hold on to their unique identity and different roles within the parish'.
- 4.16 The design guide includes design codes, which must be taken into consideration in the development of design proposals. Identified within the design code (see figure 8), is the need to retain two green gaps. The first is the gap between Middleton St George and Oak Tree. The purpose of the gap being to preserve the distinct identity and sense of place, whilst integrating them through ease of movement and connectivity.
- 4.17 The second green gap is identified as lying between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. Again, this is important to preserve the distinct identity and sense of place but also to protect and enhance the significance of the Middleton One Row Conservation Area. This area has been subject to numerous development proposals over recent years, including a proposal for 280 dwellings and a 60-bed care home on land to the west of Middleton Lane. This application was refused by the council in March 2019<sup>1</sup>. Whilst an appeal was submitted, it was subsequently withdrawn.
- 4.18 The green gap also includes land to the east of Middleton Lane. This has been subject to three residential planning applications, all of which were refused by the council. The most recent refusal<sup>2</sup> was subject to an appeal, which was dismissed<sup>3</sup>. In the decision letter, the inspector refers to the importance of site, as a key feature of green space along Middleton Lane. Also, that the site allows the countryside to permeate the built-up area with its largely undeveloped agricultural appearance, therefore contributing to the rural qualities of the conservation area and its significance. Reference is also made to the importance of views through the site to the wider countryside and that the coalescence would unacceptably alter the character of the area.

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<sup>1</sup> DBC application reference 18/00275/OUT

<sup>2</sup> DBC application reference 18/01108/FUL

<sup>3</sup> APP/N1350/W/19/3240898

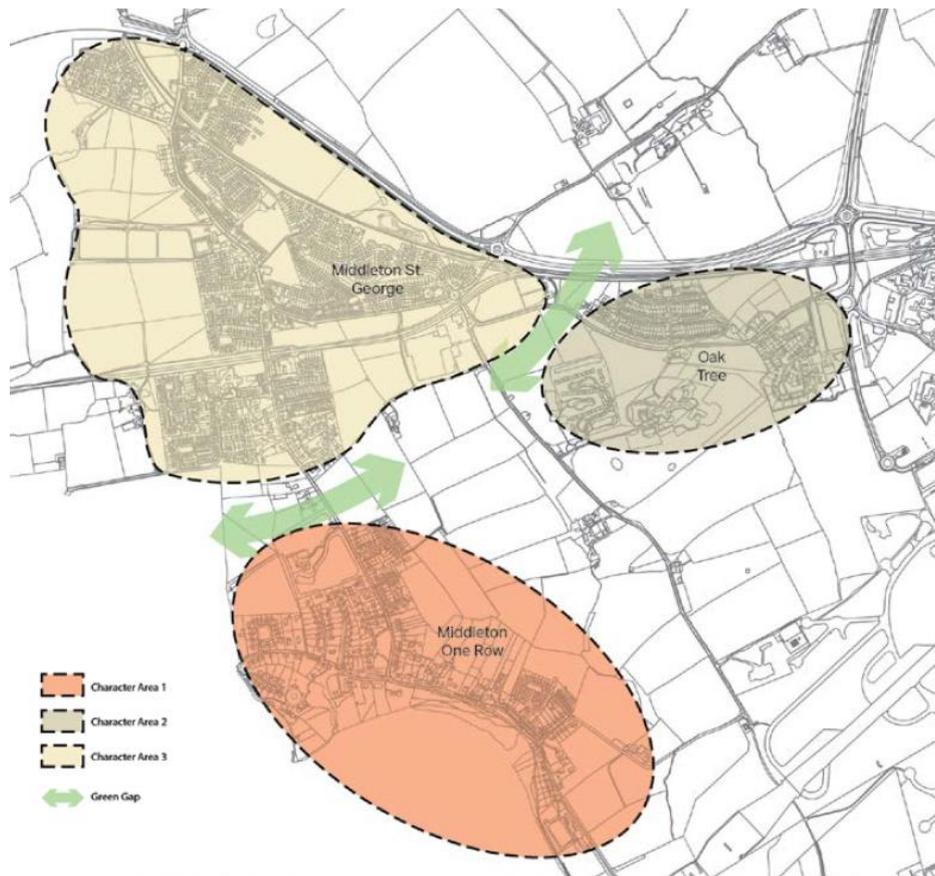


Figure 8: Extract from Middleton St George Design Guide

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## 5. Identification of a settlement boundary

5.1 As identified above, the impact of future development on the landscape and setting of the villages has been critical in the definition of the settlement boundaries as well as ensuring the boundaries support the sustainable growth of the plan area. The proposed boundaries:

- Take into account extant planning permissions;
- Will manage development to around to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the landscape setting of the village;
- Will manage development to seek to ensure that it conserves and enhances the Middleton One Row Conservation Area;
- Establishes a logical shape to the edges of the villages, again seeking to conserve and enhance the character of the area;
- Avoids irregular incursions into the open countryside; and
- Has been drawn along features which are easily identified on the ground.



*Figure 9: Proposed Middleton St George Settlement Boundary*



*Figure 11: Proposed Middleton One Row Settlement Boundary*



*Figure 10: Proposed Oak Tree Settlement Boundary*