

Skerningham Garden Community

Social and Community Infrastructure Assessment



May 2021



1 | Introduction



- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to assess the current provision of community infrastructure facilities and services in the area around Skertingham Garden Village and consider the type, sizes and forms of new community infrastructure provision which would be necessary to support the development at Skertingham.
- 1.2 An audit has been undertaken to establish what services currently serve the local community and the available capacity of these to accommodate greater demand. This has involved identifying the capacity of existing community and social infrastructure in the area, and establishing over and above the baseline position, what unmet community infrastructure requirements will arise from the proposed development. Ultimately the report is intended to inform the mix of social and community facilities and services that Skertingham Garden Village would need to incorporate to build a sustainable and balanced new community, well served for its day-to-day needs.
- 1.3 An audit of existing services has been drawn from a range of sources including from Darlington Borough Council, complemented by published information from other sources.

Skerningham Garden Community Masterplan

EAST COAST
MAINLINE CROSSING

ADDITIONAL LOCAL CENTRE,
FURTHER PRIMARY SCHOOL AND
POTENTIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE,
HEALTH HUB AND
PRIMARY SCHOOL

EXTENSIVE PUBLIC
ROUTES AND GREEN
CORRIDORS



NEW GOLF COURSE FOR DARLINGTON

ENHANCEMENTS TO RIVER SKERNE CORRIDOR

BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT CREATION

EMPLOYMENT



2 | Existing Provision

Introduction

2.1 Understanding the existing provision of social and community infrastructure in Darlington is an important consideration in assessing the implications of the future development at Skerningham. It helps set the context in respect of the infrastructure which will be required as a consequence of the household and population growth generated by Skerningham Garden Community.

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows the existing community and social infrastructure within 3 miles of Skerningham. It shows there is a good level of provision in the surrounding area, making Skerningham a strong location for a sustainable Garden Community. Existing facilities are principally focussed to the south and south west in the main urban area in Darlington.

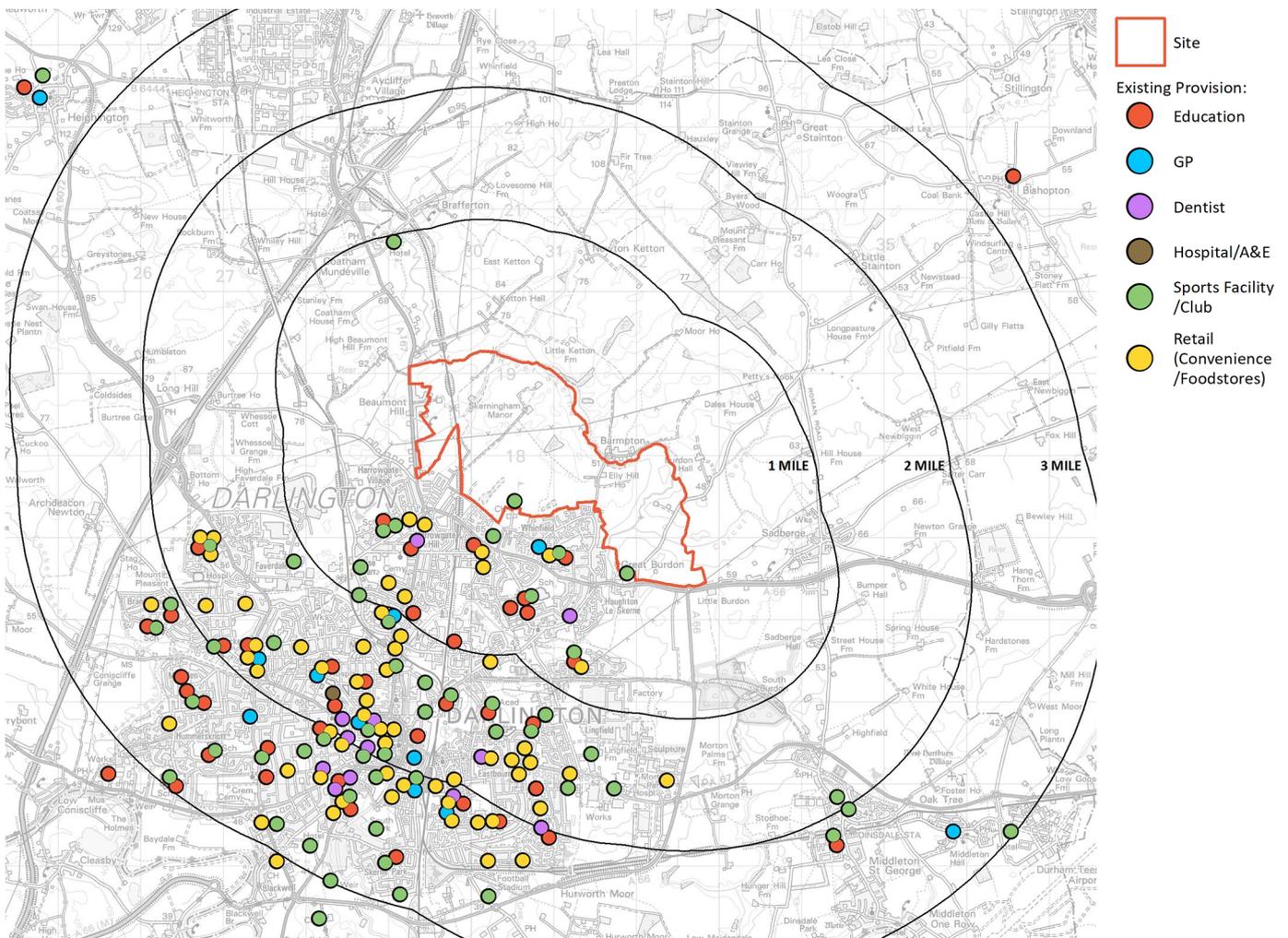


Figure 2.1: Existing Social and Community Infrastructure
Source: Lichfields

Education

- 2.3 In assessing the existing education provision in Darlington, Lichfields has followed the guidance outlined by the Department for Education, alongside sensitivity testing based on the methodology used to underpin the Darlington Pupil Place Report.
- 2.4 An assessment has been made of primary schools within a 2-mile walking distance of a site and secondary schools within a 3 mile walking distance.

Primary

- 2.5 Six primary schools were identified to be within 2 miles of the site. Of the primary schools identified:
- a) In total the 6 schools provide 2,545 places;
 - b) 4 of the schools have capacity as of 2020 data – a total of 230 spaces; and
 - c) There is currently 9% capacity within the primary schools, or 7% when applying the 2% buffer. The Audit commission recommends that for school place planning purposes, schools maintain a 5% vacancy rate to allow for choice and annual fluctuations in intakes.

Sensitivity – Darlington Pupil Place Methodology

- 2.6 Based on the Darlington Pupil Place methodology, which draws on a different approach to future projections as a result of the single place planning area across the town, this identifies two primary schools that children from the development at Skerningham are expected to feed into. These are; Whinfield Primary School and St Bede's Catholic Primary School.
- 2.7 Based on the School Census 2020, the two primary schools had a total of 866 pupils on their rolls. In combination there was a surplus capacity of 53 places or 6% capacity. It should be noted that although there was an overall surplus, St Bede's Catholic School exceeded their documented capacity. However, there is considerable capacity in non-denominational schools, which are arguably more relevant given it is difficult to quantify the proportion of future households likely to express a preference to have their children attend a 'faith' school.
- 2.8 When the 2% buffer is applied to existing primary schools, existing capacity is reduced from 6% to 4%

Secondary

- 2.9 Two secondary schools are identified within 3 miles of the site. The secondary schools:
- a) Provide 1,800 places in total;
 - b) There is current capacity based on 2020 data – a total of 127 spare capacity; and
 - c) Together the schools are operating at 7% capacity or 5% when applying the 2% buffer applied.

2 | Existing Provision

2.10 Reflecting the Darlington Pupil Place methodology for secondary schools there are two identified which will take pupils from Skerningham, these are: Haughton Academy and Carmel College. In 2020, the combined capacity of these schools equated to 2,282 pupils. There were 2,093 pupils registered resulting in an 8% surplus. Applying the 2% buffer reduces capacity to 6%.

Summary

2.11 Two alternative approaches to assessing education capacity have been considered; Lichfields based on the Department of Education Analysis and the approach used by the Council in respect of the Pupil Place Planning Assessment.

2.12 Lichfields approach has been applied and tested elsewhere and is considered to be robust and the Council's approach reflects their single place planning across the town. The two approaches identify different schools under consideration in the assessment as a consequence of the methodologies used. However, both approaches demonstrate the existence of capacity in schools in the surrounding area (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.3).

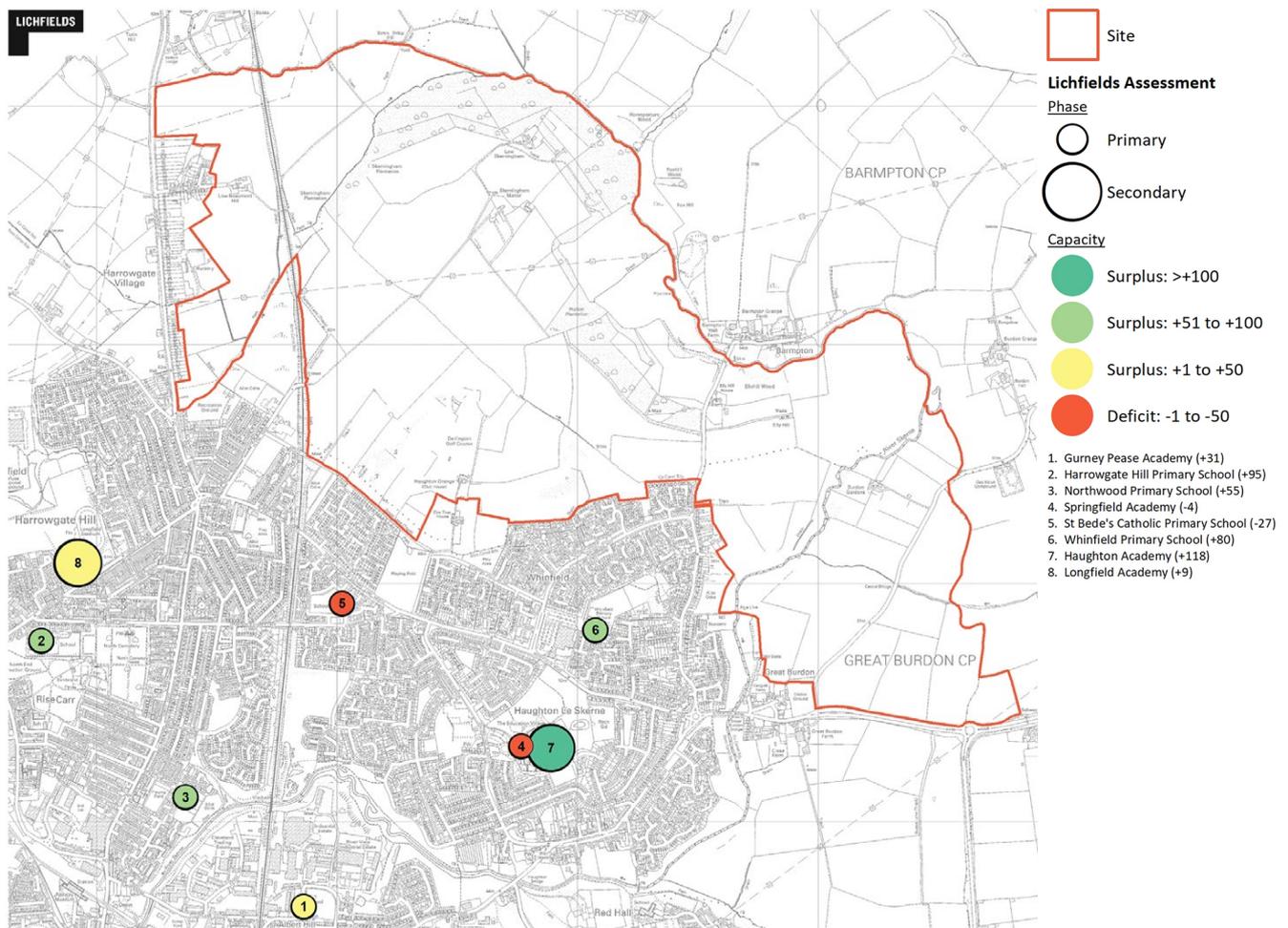


Figure 2.2: Existing Primary and Secondary School Capacity
 Source: Lichfields/Department of Education Analysis

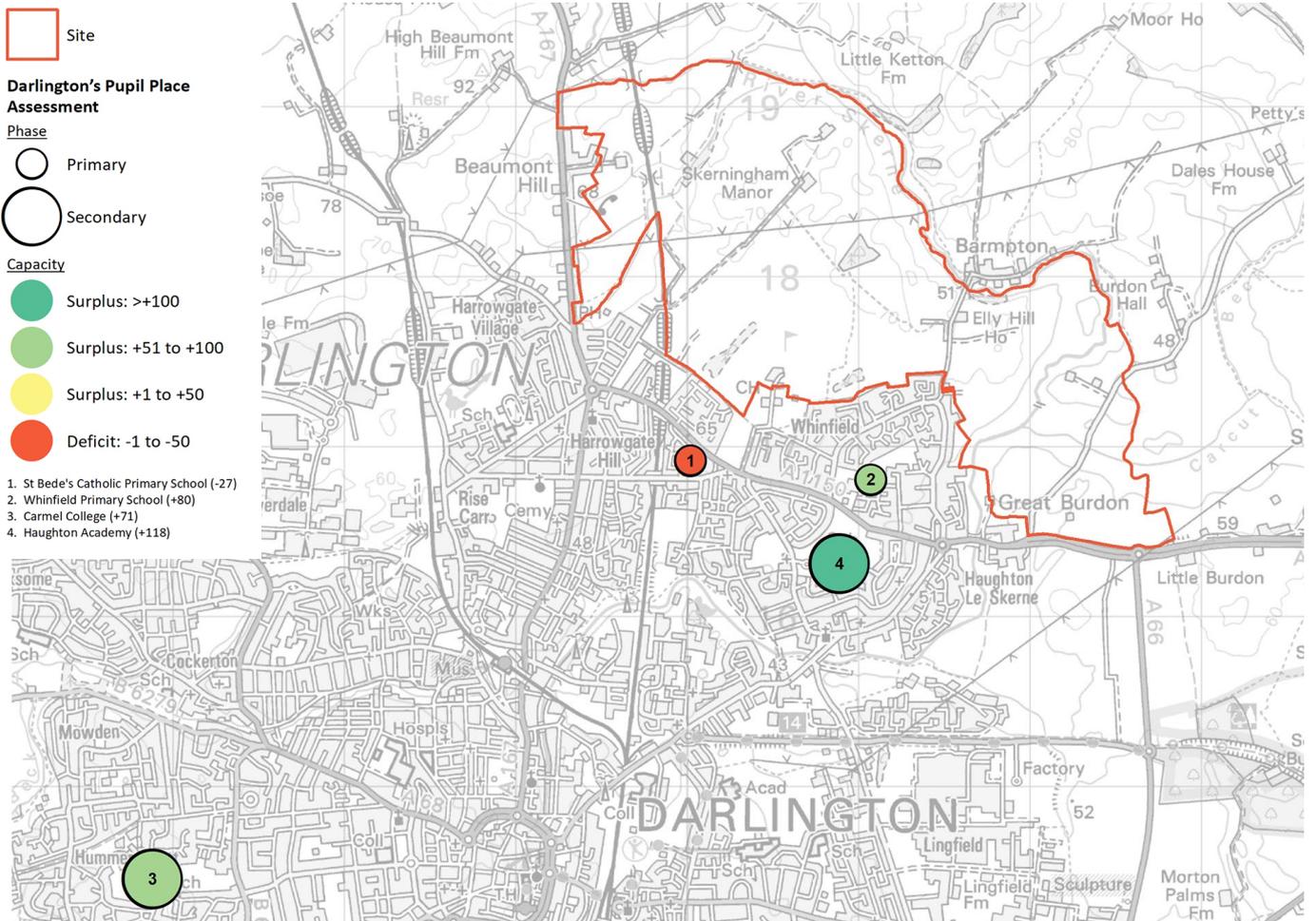


Figure 2.3: Darlington Pupil Place Planning Assessment
 Source: Lichfields/Darlington Pupil Place Planning

2 | Existing Provision

Health Facilities

Doctors

2.13 8 GP practices are identified to be within 3 miles walking distance of Skerningham, with a total of 46 FTE GPs. These practices provide for 87,568 patients. Together, the medical practices have a GP to patient ratio of 1:1,904. This is slightly over the GP/patient ratio identified by the Department of Health benchmark of 1 to 1,800 patients.

2.14 Looking more broadly at the Darlington Primary Care Network (PCN), these 11 practices have a total of 55 FTE GPs, serving 109,585 patients, resulting in a GP to patient ratio of 1:1,992. With regard to the Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), in which Skerningham is located, there are 80 practices, with 380 FTE GPs, providing for 710,437 patients. This is a GP to patient ratio of 1:1,869.

2.15 This analysis highlights that although capacity within 3 miles of Skerningham is above the national benchmark, this needs to be considered in the context of the PCN and CCG. Existing provision and capacity is broadly comparable with the Tees Valley CCG and compares favourably with the Darlington PCN. As such, it would appear that in practical terms there may still be some slack to accommodate growth.

2.16 The nearest hospital is the Darlington Memorial Hospital which is 3 miles from the site. The hospital provides a range of acute healthcare services including an Accident and Emergencies Department.

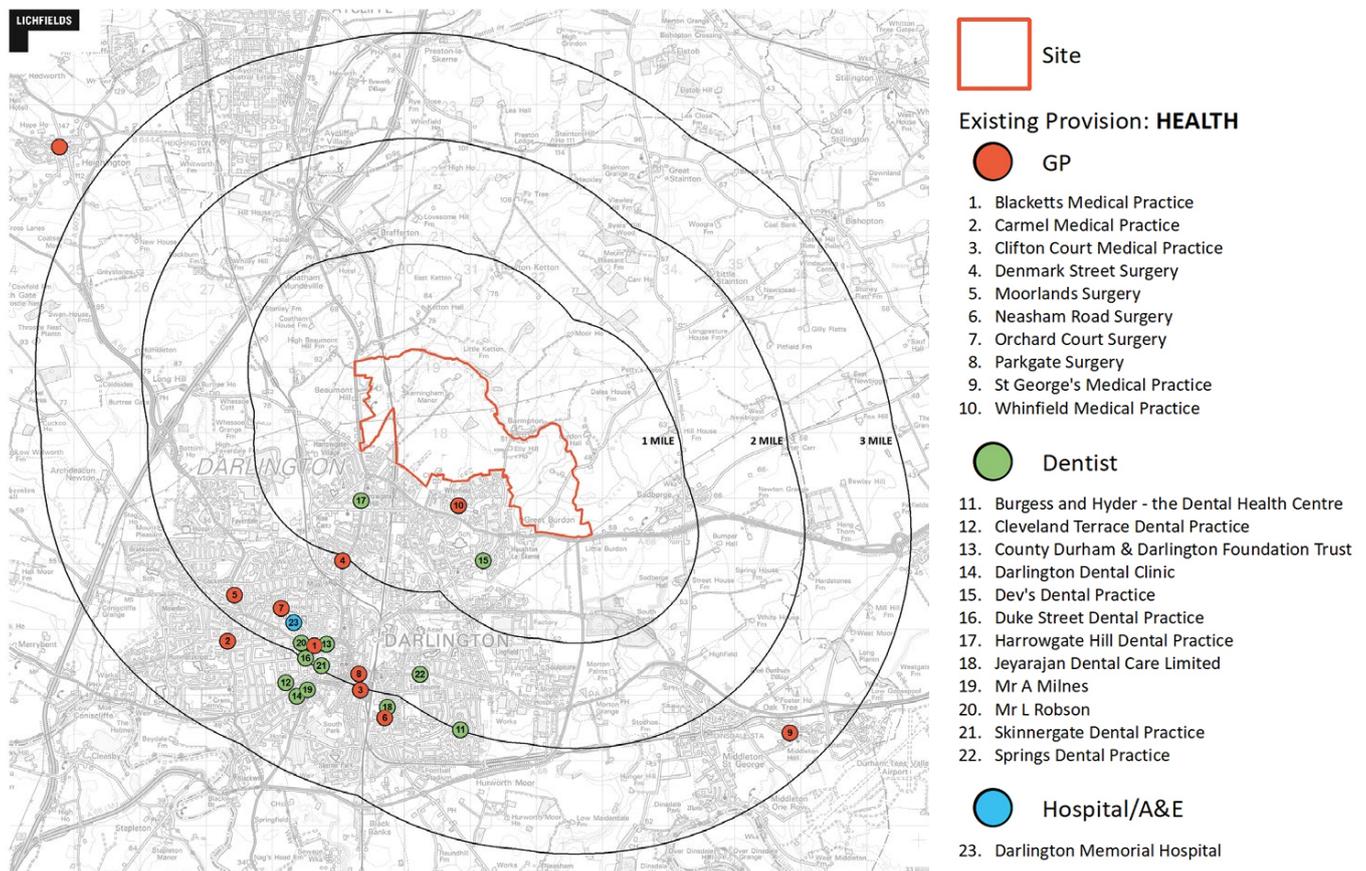


Figure 2.4: Existing health provision
Source: Lichfields/NHS Choices

Dentists

- 2.17 There are currently 12 dental practices with 30 dentists within a 3 mile walking distance of Skerningham.
- 2.18 Data is not available for capacity in the local area; but of the 12 existing dentist practices which are located within 3 miles of Skerningham, one practice is accepting new NHS patients. A number of the practices stated that this was a result of reduced capacity due to Covid-19 restrictions limiting the number of patients they could see in a day and that they anticipated that, once restrictions were relaxed, they likely be able to start accepting new patients.

Sports and Recreational Facilities

- 2.19 There are a range of sports facilities and publicly accessible planning pitches within a 3 mile radius of Skerningham that currently serve the local populations (Figure 2.5). These include a number of schools/academies in the area which have sports facilities for community use.

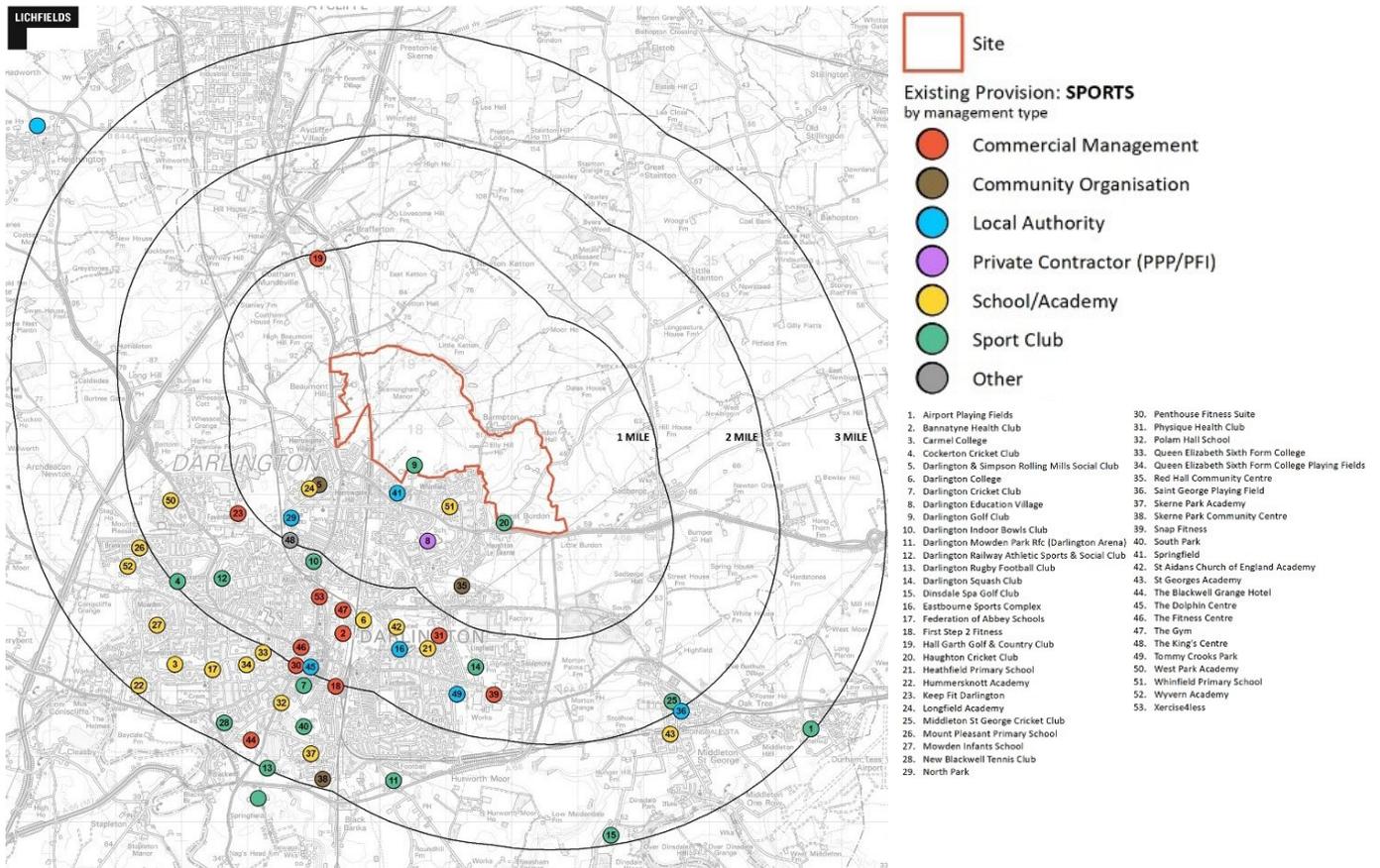


Figure 2.5: Sports Provision Skerningham
Source: Lichfields/NHS Choices

2 | Existing Provision

2.20 A number of documents provide the evidence in respect of Darlington's approach to requirements for sports facilities in the future including;

- Darlington Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Needs Assessment and Evidence Base (June 2015);
- Darlington Open Space Strategy (2007 to 2017); and
- The Impact of Growth on Demand for Sports Facilities WYG (March 2019).

2.21 The 2015 'Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Needs Assessment and Evidence Base' highlights:

- There is a degree of spare capacity on most pitches. However, some pitches at Longfield Academy, Carmel College, Hummersknott School and Language College. Darlington School of Maths and Science and Darlington Railway Athletic Club are overplayed.

- Longfield Academy and Carmel College confirm their facilities to be at capacity.
- In contrast there are several sites that receive little or no use – many of these are primary school sites that have formal lettings policies but do not necessarily have appropriate facilities to support a club. These include Whinfield Academy, Northwood Primary School and Harrowgate Hill Primary.
- The overall situation is that at peak times provision is constrained but outside this time there are sites that are not used. Most of the spare capacity is at sites that are less desirable to clubs.

Retail Provision

2.22 There are 19 supermarkets and 40 convenience stores within a 3 mile radius of the site. The Asda superstore which is the closest largest supermarket is found less than one mile to the south west of the site.

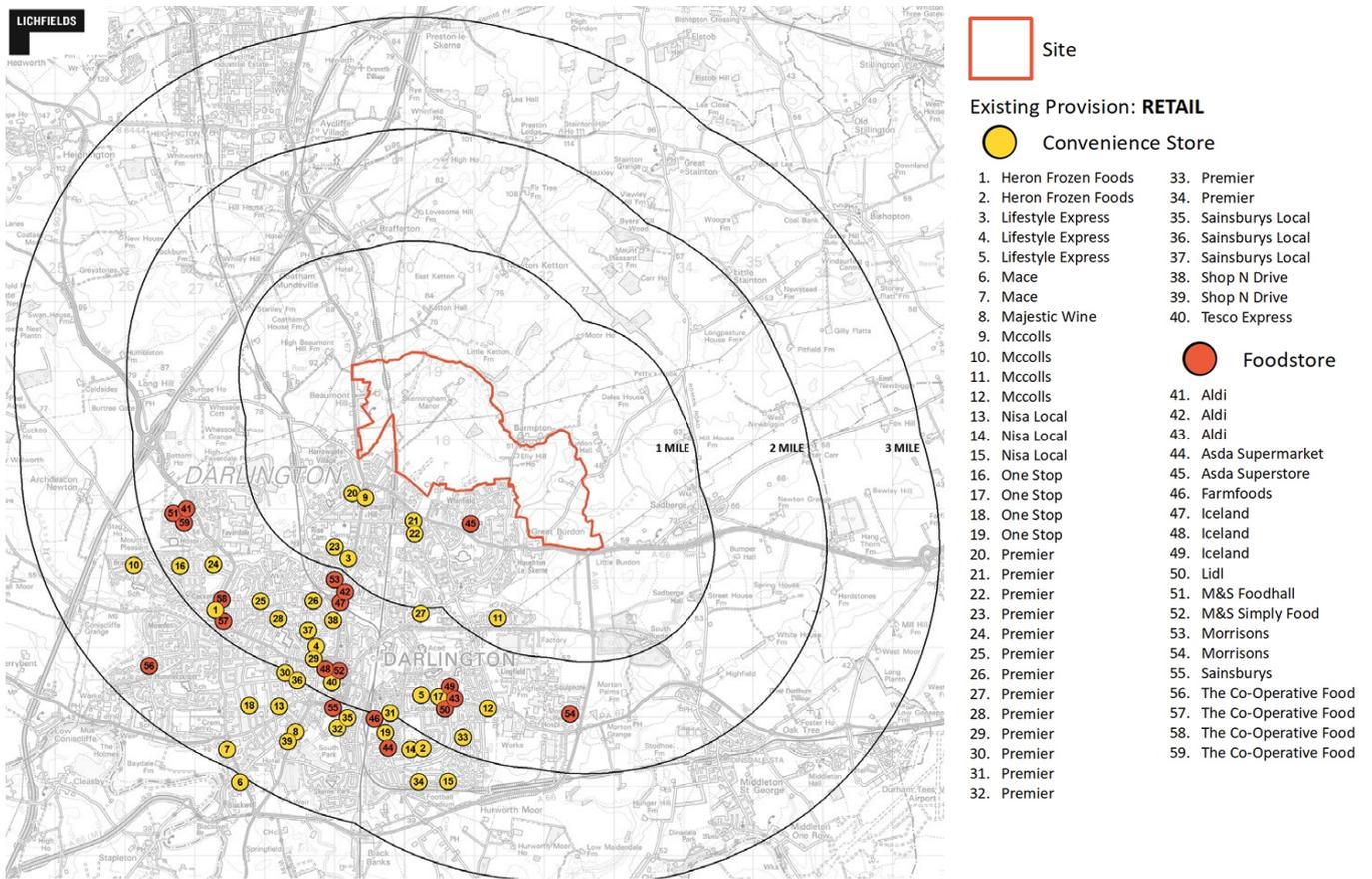


Figure 2.6: Existing retail provision
Source: Lichfields/Store Point Data/Lichfields Analysis

2 | Existing Provision

- 2.23 A study undertaken by WYG Group Limited in 2015 'How Far Do People Walk?', identifies that in terms of walking distances for shopping the mean distance walked is 0.6 miles and the 85th percentile 1 mile.
- 2.24 There are 7 convenience stores and 1 supermarket within one mile of Skerningham.
- 2.25 Local shops and services have an important local function and contribute towards the vitality and viability of a settlement. There are 19 convenience stores within three miles of the site, the nearest is located 0.5 miles to the east of the site.
- 2.26 The Darlington Town Centre and Retail Study Update (2017) (WYG) concludes there is no quantitative need for additional convenience good facilities across Darlington throughout the period to 2036.
- 2.27 In respect of comparison retail need, the Study concludes that it is necessary for the Council to consider allocating land to accommodate new comparison goods floorspace within the Borough over the longer term (2032 to 2036). The Study identifies a site at Commercial Street as the preferable location to accommodate retail development in the town.

Summary of Existing Provision

- 2.28 Table 2.1 provides a summary of the current capacity of the community infrastructure in the area surrounding Skerningham in relation to existing capacity against service provider benchmarks.
- 2.29 It is apparent that there is surplus capacity in a number of local services, notably including primary and secondary schools and retail provision. It is evident that capacity in existing GP services exceeds the national benchmark, but compares favourably to the wider Darlington PCN. It is not know how many patients are registered at each dental practice. However, there are 30 dentists within the 12 dental practices in a 3 mile radius of the site.

INFRASTRUCTURE	EXTENT OF SURPLUS/DEFICIT	CAPACITY AGAINST STANDARD PROVISION
Primary School	230 (9% capacity / 7% with buffer)	Surplus
Secondary School	127 (7% capacity / 5% with buffer)	Surplus
GP Surgeries	1:1,904	Surpassed
Dental Surgeries	Unknown	~
Sports Grounds	Deficit in Darlington	Surpassed
Informal Green Space	Sufficient supply	Sufficient
Parks, Sports and Recreation Ground	Sufficient Supply	Sufficient
Retail	No convenience need identified	Sufficient

Table 2.1: Summary of existing capacity
Source: Lichfields Analysis

3 | Needs of the New Community

- 3.1 The implications of a new settlement comprising 1,650 homes over the plan period and a further 2,850 homes beyond the plan period will generate substantial community infrastructure requirements to meet the needs of its associated population. This can either lead to a need for additional provision or improvements to existing infrastructure or may simply make better use of under-utilised infrastructure that is already present.
- 3.2 Lichfields has run the scenarios based on the 1,650 dwellings identified in the Local Plan Trajectory and the Skerningham Delivery Framework. This is summarised in Table 3.1.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	TOTAL
Local Plan Housing Trajectory	30	60	90	120	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	1,650

Table 3.1: Skerningham Local Plan Housing Trajectory
Source: Darlington Submission Draft Local Plan

- 3.3 Population numbers have been assumed based on an expected 2.2 persons per household, utilising 2018-based sub national population projections.

Education

- 3.4 For school planning purposes Darlington Borough Council assume child yields of 20 primary aged children/100 dwellings and 12 secondary school aged children/100 dwellings. It is assumed that for a development of 1,650 dwellings there will be 330 primary aged children and 198 secondary school aged children generated through new households. The profile is shown below having regard to the anticipated trajectory of development.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Skerningham Local Plan Housing Trajectory	30	60	90	120	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Primary @20/100 dwellings	6	18	36	60	90	120	150	180	210	240	270	300	330
Secondary @ 12/100 dwellings	4	11	22	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180	198

Table 3.2: Cumulative school places generated by Skerningham
Source: Lichfields Analysis based on Darlington Pupil Place Document

Lichfields based on Department of Education Approach

Primary

- 3.5 The assessment of the six primary schools within a 2-mile walking distance of the site identifies a total of 9% capacity (or 7% when the 2% surplus is taken into account). In addition, it can be seen that surplus capacity is anticipated throughout the period, ranging from 502 places in 2024 rising to 757 places in 2036.
- 3.6 Whinfield Primary School, Harrowgate Hill Primary School and Northwood Primary Schools have the greatest identified capacity going forward.
- 3.7 The assessment takes into account the data underpinning the Darlington Pupil Place Projections utilising the ‘scaled sites’ which considers sites with and without planning permission. This approach thereby presents the worst-case scenario in terms of education capacity, should all sites be brought forward for development. The Pupil Place Planning Projections document only accounts for 90 homes delivered at Skerningham by 2031, whereas the Local Plan Housing Trajectory anticipates c.900 homes completed by 2031. The anticipated Local Plan Housing Trajectory for Skerningham has been accommodated within this assessment.
- 3.8 The growth in 330 primary school pupils at Skerningham would be accommodated within the identified capacity at existing primary schools.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Capacity	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545	2,545
Forecast Roll	2,043	2,000	1,971	1,905	1,870	1,846	1,813	1,805	1,864	1,788	1,788	1,788	1,788
Surplus/Capacity/ [Shortfall] excluding Skerningham	502	545	574	640	675	699	732	740	681	757	757	757	757
Cumulative Primary School Places required by Skerningham	6	18	36	60	90	120	150	180	210	240	270	300	330
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] including Skerningham	496	527	538	580	585	579	582	560	471	517	487	457	427
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] with 2% buffer (inc. Skerningham)	412	441	453	493	506	524	534	540	511	545	545	545	545

Table 3.3: Assessment of Future Primary Education need against identified capacity
Source: Lichfields Analysis/Darlington Pupil Place Projections

3 | Needs of the New Community

Secondary

- 3.9 In respect of the existing capacity of the two secondary schools identified as being within 3-miles walking distance of the site, both have capacity. Albeit Haughton Academy has a greater amount of capacity compared to Longfield Academy. Taken together, the two schools have 7%, or 5% when the 2% surplus is identified.
- 3.10 The assessment of cumulative secondary school places at Skerningham (198 over the period to 2036) highlights that these could be accommodated within the identified capacity within the two secondary schools identified.
- 3.11 Table 3.5 highlights that there is capacity available through to the end of the plan period to accommodate the new pupils expected to be generated by the development at Skerningham.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Capacity	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Forecast Roll	1,740	1,767	1,712	1,668	1,624	1,528	1,469	1,397	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220
Surplus/Capacity/[Shortfall] excluding Skerningham	60	33	88	132	176	272	331	403	580	580	580	580	580
Cumulative Primary School Places required by Skerningham	4	11	22	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180	198
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] including Skerningham	56	22	66	96	122	200	241	295	454	436	418	400	382
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] with 2% buffer (inc. Skerningham)	49	9	39	51	56	109	128	159	287	251	215	179	143

Table 3.5: Assessment of Future Secondary Education need against identified capacity

Source: Lichfields Analysis/Darlington Pupil Place Projections

Sensitivity – Darlington Pupil Place Methodology

Primary

- 3.12 The baseline assessment indicated that there is over 6% capacity in the two primary schools identified by Darlington Borough Council as the schools where the pupil impact of Skertingham will be encountered.
- 3.13 The greatest proportion of capacity is found in Whinfield Primary School, with less capacity found in St Bede’s Catholic Primary School.
- 3.14 Table 3.6 presents the cumulative assessment of capacity over the plan period, utilising Darlington Pupil Place assessment. It identifies primary school capacity runs out at 2034, with only 3 places available in 2033. When the 2% surplus is applied, this results in the capacity of primary school places running out in 2032 with 31 places available in 2031.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Capacity	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919	919
Surplus/Capacity/[Shortfall] excluding Skertingham	223	233	245	265	282	296	308	311	243	243	243	243	243
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] including Skertingham	217	215	209	205	192	176	158	131	33	3	-27	-57	-87
Surplus/Capacity [Shortfall] with 2% buffer including Skertingham	168	161	148	133	110	87	59	31	-25	-55	-85	-115	-145

Table 3.6: Assessment of Current and Future Capacity of Primary Schools based on Whinfield and St Bede’s Catholic Primary School
Source: Lichfields Analysis/Darlington Pupil Place Projections

3 | Needs of the New Community

Secondary

- 3.15 Analysis shows there is 8% capacity in the two secondary schools identified by Darlington Borough Council as the schools where the pupil impact of Skerningham will be experienced.
- 3.16 Haughton Academy has the greatest capacity and Carmel College has less projected capacity.
- 3.17 In terms of secondary education capacity, there is a shortage in 2025 which seems to present an exception, as beyond that there is capacity in every year over the remainder of the plan period.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Capacity	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282	2,282
Surplus/Capacity/[Shortfall] excluding Skerningham	31	6	62	109	155	251	311	379	556	556	556	556	556
Surplus/Capacity/[Shortfall] including Skerningham	27	-5	40	73	101	179	221	271	430	412	394	376	358
Surplus/Capacity/[Shortfall] with 2% buffer including Skerningham	27	-5	40	73	101	179	221	271	430	412	394	376	358

Table 3.7: Assessment of current and future capacity of secondary schools based on Haughton Academy and Carmel College
Source: Lichfields Analysis/Pupil Place Planning

Health

- 3.18 At present, there is a GP to patient ratio of 1: 1,904 across the 8 GP practices within 3 miles walking distance from Skerningham, which is slightly above the Department of Health ratio of 1 FTE GP to 1,800 patients.
- 3.19 The proposed development over the plan period is expected to result in a population increase of 3,630 (c. 1,650 dwellings). Assuming a ratio of 1 GP to 1,800 patients, slightly more than 2 FTE GPs could provide for the population of the proposed development over the plan period.
- 3.20 However, in delivering a health centre, Skerningham will contribute to addressing the current shortfall in GP provision. Adding the 3,630 individuals expected to be generated by Skerningham to the 87,568 patients already provided for by the practices within walking distance of Skerningham would result in a total population of 91,198 patients. In order to achieve a ratio of 1 GP to 1,800 patients, 4.5 GPs would be required to address the existing shortfall and the requirement generated by Skerningham.
- 3.21 Assuming the Skerningham GP practice with 4.5 FTE GPs is delivered in 2029, the maximum number of patients per GP is reached in 2028, at a ratio of 1 FTE GP to 1,925 patients. This is still lower than the current GP to patient ratio across Darlington PCN (1: 1,992) and would appear (based on local precedents) that this temporary increase beyond the national benchmark could be accommodated. The aspiration is to resolve this in the medium term through the delivery of new provision at Skerningham and these facilities are key to the proposals for a sustainable settlement.

	CURRENT POSITION	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Local Plan Trajectory		30	60	90	120	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Cumulative		30	90	180	300	450	600	750	900	1,050	1,200	1,350	1,500	1,650
Skerningham Population		66	198	396	660	990	1,320	1,650	1,980	2,310	2,640	2,970	3,300	3,630
Current Pop. + Skerningham Pop	87,568	87,634	87,766	87,964	88,228	88,558	88,888	89,218	89,548	89,878	90,208	90,538	90,868	91,198
FTE GPs (to nearest 1 GP)	46	46	46	46	46	46	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
Patients per FTE GP	1,904	,905	,908	1,912	1,918	,925	1,760	1,767	1,773	1,780	1,786	1,793	1,799	1,806

Table 3.8: Anticipated GP to patient ratios, assuming Skerningham
Source: NHS Digital Data/Lichfields Analysis

- 3.22** Department of Health benchmarks require 1 dentist per 2,000 population. However, given that only one surgery, of the 12 located within 3 miles of the site, is accepting NHS patients, this suggests existing capacity is limited, albeit it is anticipated that a number of the practices will start to accept new patients once Covid restrictions are lift later this year. Indeed, prior to Covid many of the practices were accepting new patients.
- 3.23** The anticipated population increase associated with c.1,650 units generates a need for 2 additional dentists. Table 3.9 sets out how the ratio of patients to dentists evolves based on the housing trajectory identified. It highlights that by 2029 there would be the requirement for 1 dentist, with the second dentist required in 2035.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Skerningham anticipated population	66	198	396	660	990	1320	1650	1980	2310	2640	2970	3300	3630
Additional patients per existing dentists (30 dentists) as a consequence of Skerningham	2	7	13	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121
FTE Dentists	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Patients per Dentist (Dept of Health 1:2000)	0.03	0.10	0.20	0.33	0.50	0.66	0.83	0.99	1.16	1.32	1.49	1.65	1.82

Table 3.9: Anticipated demand for dentists
Source: Lichfields Analysis

- 3.24** Table 3.9 shows that prior to a dental practice being provided as part of the Neighbourhood Centre, each existing dentist would be required to take on an additional 33 patients to address the additional demand generated by Skerningham. This would be a small, temporary impact prior to the development meeting its own needs mid-way through the plan which would meet the demand generated by the development up to 2035.

3 | Needs of the New Community

Community Facilities – Sports Facilities

- 3.25 The most recent relevant document in assessing the future need for sports facilities is the 'Impact of Growth on Demand for Sports Facilities' (2019). The report references the 2015 'Darlington Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Needs Assessment and Evidence Base'. The 2019 report considers the cumulative assessment of the 3 strategic housing developments in Darlington identified in the emerging Local Plan, including Skerningham and also the other planned housing developments over the plan period. The report states that the 3 strategic developments generate additional demand over and above that identified within the existing Playing Pitch Strategy (2015) but that none of the developments individually are large enough to generate significant requirements for new pitches in isolation.
- 3.26 Given the quantum of the development at Skerningham, it is identified as a location which may be suitable for future provision particularly in respect of; playing pitches for football, rugby and hockey, where there is an identified need, particularly for a 3G pitch. Skerningham also generates a need for more than half a pitch for youth and mini football.
- 3.27 In respect of Sports Halls, the 2019 assessment identifies that there is no requirement for provision but the cumulative requirement over the long term may result in a need for something to be provided at Skerningham.
- 3.28 It is anticipated that the secondary school provided as part of the development at Skerningham would help meet the additional need through the provision of sports facilities which could be accessed by the wider community out of school hours.
- 3.29 Darlington's Open Space Strategy (2007 to 2017) sets out a number of policies which the Council will aim to achieve:
- **Policy 6** – Overall Standards of Provision - in the main urban area, the provision of open space maintained and improved to achieve: 6.5ha of open space per 1,000 people, of which 6.2ha per 1,000 people is accessible, an accessible open space of at least 0.1ha within 300m of 99% of dwellings and 70% of open spaces to be 3 star quality or above;
 - **Policy 9** – the Council will provide one equipped play site for every 450 children under 12 years old and locate sites so that 80% of children under 12 are within a 10 minute walk (666m of a site)
 - **Policy 10** – provide 1 recreation area of at least 3 star quality for every 500 young people under 17 years old and bring 99% of population within walking distance (or 1,000) of a young people's recreation area;
 - **Policy 11** – the Council will work towards securing outdoor sports facilities within 1000m of every home in the urban area;
 - **Policy 12** – Playing Pitch Standard – 1.05 ha of accessible playing pitches per 1,000 people for the Borough as a whole;
 - **Policy 15** – work towards standard of natural and semi-natural green space of 5ha/1000 population, so 60% of population is within 600m (9 minute walk) of at least 1 accessible site;
 - **Policy 17** – Informal Open Space – 6.0 ha/1,000 population – at least one accessible informal recreation space within 300m of 99% of all homes in the main built up urban area; and
- 3.30 In terms of open space provision associated with new development, the Strategy sets out what will be expected within new developments. Policy 19 sets out that provision made will be assessed by reference to the standards set out in the relevant policies (those listed above).
- 3.31 Policy 20 states that securing appropriate open space and their maintenance (referencing Policy 17) should be made onsite where possible.
- 3.32 For Skerningham, the anticipated development trajectory would result in a growth of young people, c.528 over the plan period. Table 3.10 highlights how this need is anticipated to impact on the need for future sports facility provision.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Local Plan Trajectory	30	60	90	120	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Cumulative	30	90	180	300	450	600	750	900	1050	1200	1350	1500	1650
Primary Children@200/100 dwellings	6	12	18	24	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Secondary Children @ 12/100 dwellings	4	7	11	14	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Anticipated Pop. Cumulative	66	198	396	660	990	1320	1650	1980	2310	2640	2970	3300	3630
Primary Children Cumulative	6	18	36	60	90	120	150	180	210	240	270	300	330
Secondary Children Cumulative	4	11	22	36	54	72	90	108	126	144	162	180	198
All Children Cumulative	10	29	58	96	144	192	240	288	336	384	432	480	528
Play Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
Recreation play area	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1
Playing pitch (ha)	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.1	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.8
Natural and green space	0.3	1.0	2.0	3.3	5.0	6.6	8.3	9.9	11.6	13.2	14.9	16.5	18.2
Patients per Dentist (Dept of Health 1:2000)	0.396	1.188	2.376	3.96	5.94	7.92	9.9	11.88	13.86	15.84	17.82	19.8	21.78

Table 3.10: Development trajectory impact on provision of community facilities

Source: Lichfields analysis

3.33 Table 3.10 highlights:

- c. 528 children of school age would be anticipated to live in the in Skerningham, therefore in this plan period there would be a requirement to deliver 1 recreation area as part of the wider development;
- In order to comply with Policy 12 there is a need for 3.8 ha of accessible playing pitches; and
- The development at Skerningham would result in a requirement for 21.8 ha of land of informal open space.

3.34 It is, however, of note that the overall development of Skerningham Garden Community incorporates c.50% open space.

Retail

3.35 The proposed Skerningham Garden Village will include a local centre which will contain shops and services, amongst other community uses, in order to serve the day to day shopping needs of the new community. In considering the amount and scale of retail provision, we have benchmarked Skerningham site of similar sizes and considered the scale of local spending likely available to support new shops and services. In terms of convenience shopping it is envisaged that day-to-day needs could be supported by a small-mid size food-store supermarket which would be complemented by a range of other smaller retail (use class A1) units both in the settlement centre and local centres, complemented a similar amount of other types of retail services (use classes A2-A5).

3.36 Together the neighbourhood centre will meet the day-to-day retail needs of local residents within walking distance of their homes, which is envisaged to include: health care facilities including a GP surgery and dentist surgery. For higher order comparison shopping needs (e.g. fashion, furniture and electricals) it is expected residents would still need to travel into Darlington and the retail offer here.

4 | Approach to Community Infrastructure Provision at Skerningham

4.1 Garden Villages are expected to be developed around a number of principles which are based on the need for high quality place-making. These principles include; sustainable scale and well-designed places. These two qualities focus on the need to provide the necessary infrastructure to allow a community to function self-sufficiently on a day to day basis and support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.

4.2 The findings of the assessment of social and community infrastructure identified in the area surrounding Skerningham identifies surplus capacity within most services, other than GP practices.

4.3 It does however remain critical that services and infrastructure are incorporated at the appropriate time into the development, to create a sense of community and create an attractive place where people want to live.

4.4 The Skerningham Delivery Framework, submitted as part of the Regulation 19 consultation for the Local Plan, identified the following delivery trajectory including when key infrastructure provision was anticipated to be brought forward.

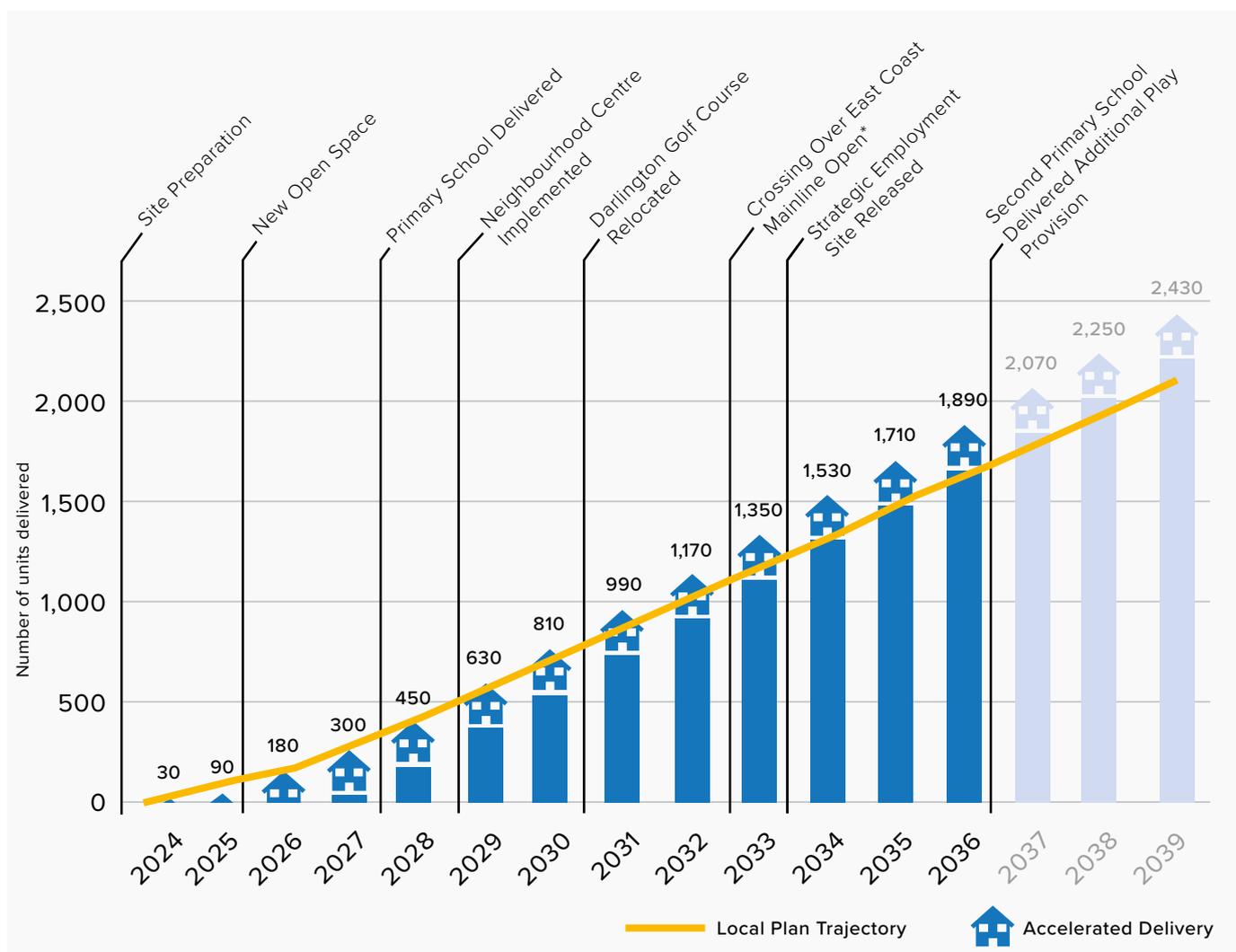


Figure 4.1: Delivery Trajectory (subject to government funding)
Source: Lichfields

4.5 Based on the assessment of existing capacity and future demand generated by the development of Skerningham Garden Community, it is important to critically consider if the delivery trajectory in Figure 4.1, in terms of infrastructure provision remains appropriate, given the masterplan has evolved, or whether some adjustments are required to ensure the community infrastructure provision meets needs.

4.6 The anticipated delivery of the first primary school in 2027 would be delivered ahead of identified need evidenced in this report. The benchmark requirements indicate that a primary school would be required by 2031 based on Darlington’s Pupil Place Planning approach and would not be required until beyond the plan period based on Lichfield approach, informed by DfE Guidance.

4.7 Early provision of a primary school would help attract and provide for aspirational families who want to live in the new settlement.

4.8 The Neighbourhood Centre is expected to include a health practice (including a GP and dentist surgery) and is anticipated to be delivered in 2028. This would result in short term tightening of provision, however the local GP patient ratio would remain below the Darlington PCN average. The impact on existing dental provision would be an additional 33 patients per dentist to be accommodated before 2027 when the issue of tightening provision would be resolved through the delivery of the Neighbourhood Centre.

4.9 Incorporating a local health facility would meet the demand generated by the development for 2 dentists and a GP practice with 4.5 GPs.

4.10 There is not an identified need for additional retail provision in terms of the existing capacity. However, the Neighbourhood Centre would deliver small scale retail provision to meet local needs.

4.11 New open space is anticipated to be delivered in 2025, at the point where there is an identified requirement for 1 ha of informal open space. There is a requirement for c.21.8ha of open spaces throughout the delivery of Skerningham across the plan period. There is also an identified need for playing pitches and recreation play areas; 2028 and 2035 respectively. These elements would be provided where required to complement the residential development and larger areas of social infrastructure such as the Neighbourhood Centre. It is acknowledged that the delivery of housing will run in advance of the delivery of open space and at points there will be a deficit against the required provision. However, overall Skerningham will provide the level of open space/playing pitches which meet the requirements identified in policy.

	SKERNINGHAM DELIVERY FRAMEWORK TRAJECTORY	TIPPING POINT
Primary School	2027	2031
GP/Dentist*	2028	2026
Retail Provision	2028	~
Open Space	2025	2025
Playing pitches	~	2028
Recreation play areas	~	2035

Table 4.1: Summary of social and community infrastructure delivery
Source: Lichfields

4.12 Delivery on this basis will ensure the development of homes at Skerningham will be supported by the community infrastructure which is central to the creation of a well-designed long-term sustainable community.

4.13 Based on the work undertaken by Fore, the East Coast Mainline crossing will take place between 2030 and 2032 which has been tested as part of the viability assessment.

