Darlington Borough Council Open Spaces Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal –

Sustainability Report

August 2006
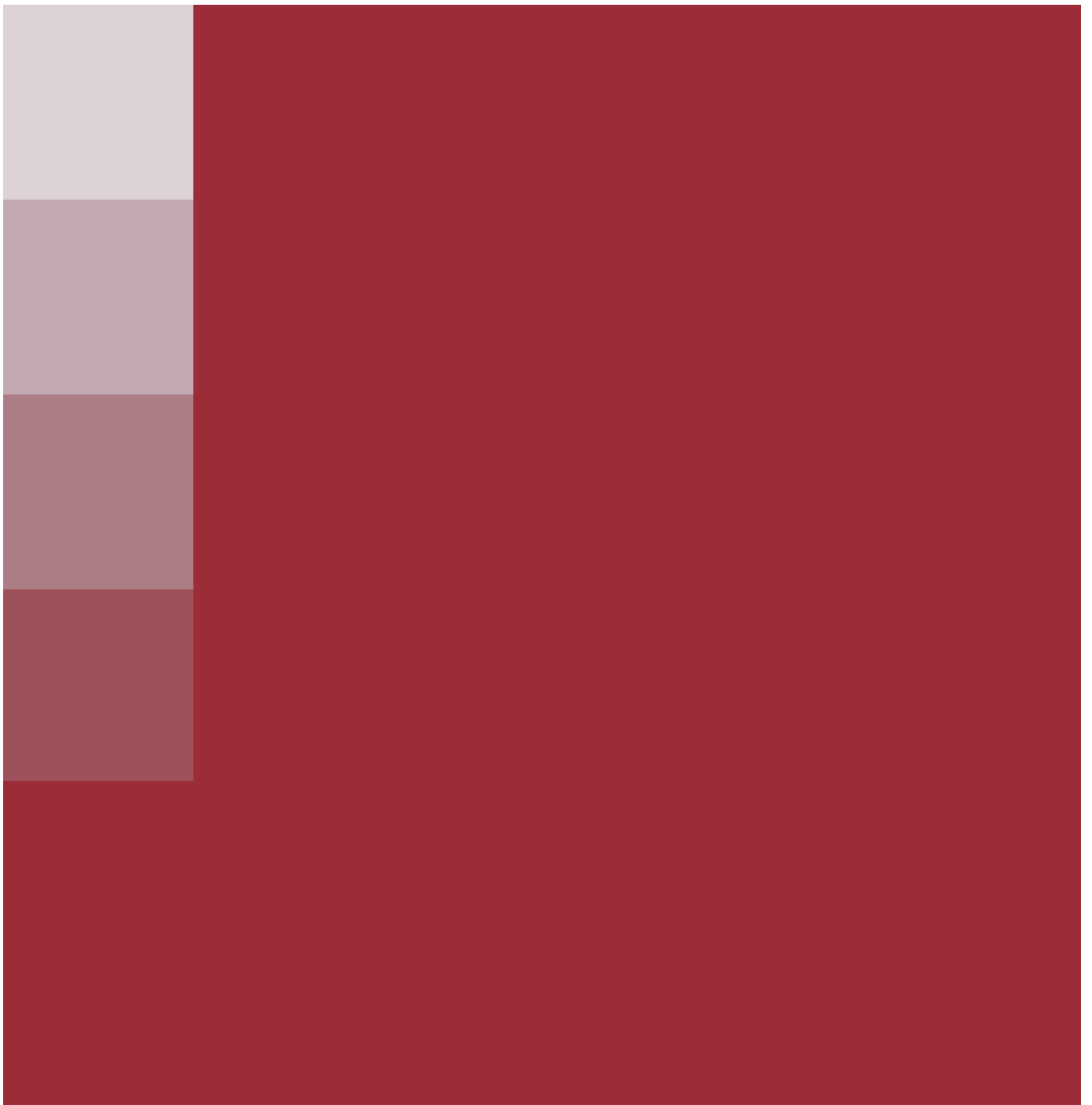
Darlington Borough Council Open Spaces Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Report

Prepared by BDP Planning
for Darlington Borough Council

August 2006

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1   SUMMARY AND OUTCOMES

Introduction

1.1   BDP Planning has been commissioned by Darlington Borough Council to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of their Open Spaces Strategy (OSS).

1.2   The Darlington OSS sets out a strategy for the protection, enhancement and management of open spaces within Darlington Borough. It is the Council's intention to integrate the land use policies that will appear in the finalised version of the Open Spaces Strategy into the appropriate documents of the Local Development Framework.

1.3   In June 2005 a Scoping Report for SA was completed that set the scope and Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the SA of the OSS. The Scoping Report was circulated to the four statutory consultees (English Nature, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Countryside Agency) and the Darlington OSS SA forum. The Darlington OSS forum comprises of representatives of a range of departments across Darlington Borough Council, other relevant bodies and the community. The combined knowledge of the SA Forum Group and the statutory consultees has ensured that all key issues have been included in the scope of the Darlington OSS SA.

1.4   Three options have been developed by Darlington Borough Council for their OSS. These options were reviewed by the Darlington OSS SA forum to ensure all reasonable options were considered for the OSS. The options vary in their level of intervention and approach to the management of open spaces within Darlington Borough. The options are described as follows:

- Option 1: Existing Local Plan Policy – No Open Spaces Strategy ('do nothing' option).

- Option 2: Proposed Approach for the OSS – Step change from local plan policy; considers a wider range of open space issues such as quality and accessibility as well as provision. Also considers the importance of open space types according to how they function and catchment area.

- Option 3: Alternative Approach to the OSS – Takes the policies given in proposed approach and generally adds further polices or slightly amends Proposed Approach policy. In most cases this option implies a higher level of intervention and aspiration than the Proposed Approach.

1.5   The SA for the OSS appraised the sustainability of three options for Darlington's Open Spaces Strategy. The appraisal was undertaken by BDP Planning and reviewed by the OSS SA forum.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1.6   The appraisal of the three options found Option 2, the 'Proposed Approach' for the OSS, to be the most sustainable option.

1.7   The appraisal has, however, revealed that the Proposed Approach could result in some significant negative impacts. These negative impacts can be mitigated, as described below. Inclusion of this mitigation in the OSS is a strong recommendation of the SA of the OSS options and will contribute to sustainable delivery of the OSS. Mitigation recommended by the SA of the OSS includes:

- The delivery of the OSS should complement the delivery of other programmes and strategies to improve health through healthy recreation and sport.
- Delivery of the OSS should complement implementation of the Local Transport Plan, which promotes the use of public transport, walking and cycling to reach open spaces.
- The OSS should include policies to ensure access into open spaces for people with children or disabled people, where this would be appropriate.
- Reassessment of low value sites before they are disposed of, considering their value in terms of neighbourhood uses, landscape value or biodiversity value.

1.8   The proposed approach also has a series of significant positive impacts that must be secured if the OSS is to be sustainable. This report (table 9.5) outlines a series of recommendations that should be included in the OSS to ensure these predicted positive impacts are delivered. These include:

- Ensuring that open space quality is improved in the east of Darlington as a priority, where there are fewer high quality open spaces.
- Ensuring that open space access improvements are prioritised for the wards in Darlington that have deficiencies in some open space types that effects accessibility.
- The inclusion of more explicit policies within the OSS to improve and maintain the biodiversity value of open spaces, to ensure all open spaces have biodiversity value as a secondary function.
- The addition of more explicit policies within the OSS to improve and maintain the landscape value of all open spaces, to ensure all open spaces have optimal landscape value.
- Ensuring that the implementation of the OSS is tied closely with events and programmes that aim to improve the health of the community through sport and recreation.

1.9   This appraisal concludes that if the Proposed Approach is delivered incorporating the recommendations for mitigation and securing positive impacts included in this report, it will be the most sustainable option for the OSS.

1.10   Finally, this report proposes a draft monitoring framework that should be implemented to monitor the effects of the OSS. The monitoring framework has been developed using the OSS Action Plan actions and targets as well as the indicators and targets in the SA framework. This monitoring framework should be finalised once the final draft of OSS has been realised and implemented alongside the OSS.

2   INTRODUCTION

Background

2.1   BDP Planning has been commissioned by Darlington Borough Council to produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the emerging Darlington Open Spaces Strategy (OSS).

2.2   The Darlington OSS sets out a strategy for the protection, enhancement and management of open spaces within Darlington Borough. It is the Council's intention to integrate the land use policies that will appear in the finalised version of the Open Spaces Strategy into an appropriate document of the Local Development Framework (the Core Strategy and Development Policies DPDs and an Open Land SPD).

2.3   Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Whilst the OSS is not to be adopted as a DPD, elements of the strategy may be incorporated into DPDs in due course. It is therefore considered helpful to assess the OSS through the process of Sustainability Appraisal.

2.4   This document has been prepared using the guidance contained within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) document Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (November 2005). This guidance covers the requirements for both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The stages required for inclusion in Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents can be found in Table 2.1 at the end of this section. Alongside each stage, information has been provided as to how the task has been completed and where it has been documented.

Consultation – Scoping Report

2.5   A Scoping Report for the SA of the Darlington OSS was produced in June 2006. The Scoping Report can be found on CD in Appendix 1.

2.6   The Scoping Report was sent to the four statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Countryside Agency, English Nature and English Heritage) for their comment. They were given a 5 week consultation period to respond and their responses can be found in Appendix 2.

2.7   In addition, this report was circulated to a number of additional consultees. Their responses can be found in Appendix 3. This list of consultees constitutes the 'Open Spaces Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Forum' (OSS SA Forum) that includes representatives of a range of departments across Darlington Borough Council and other relevant bodies. The combined knowledge of the SA Forum Group has been used to ensure that all key issues have been included in the scope of the Darlington OSS SA.

2.8   The SA forum group includes:

COUNCIL STAFF - Darlington Borough Council
Valerie Adams – Planning Policy Officer
Paula Jamieson – Sustainability Officer
Karen Johnson – Planning Policy Officer
Paul Crompton – Parks and Open Spaces Manager
David Plews Policy Advisor, Social Inclusion

NON COUNCIL STAFF
Ruth Brown
Jonathan Smith
Yvonne Richardson, Friends of North Lodge Park
Cliff Evans – Darlington Wildlife Group

Appraisal Process

2.9   The Sustainability Appraisal process has been undertaken alongside the development of the OSS. This is demonstrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Compliance with the stages of ODPM Guidance *Sustainability Appraisal of RSSs and LDDs*

Stage	Where each task is completed
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	
A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.	Section 3 and Section 6 Scoping Report
A2: Collecting baseline information.	Section 4 and Section 6 Scoping Report
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.	Section 5 Scoping Report
A4: Developing the SA framework.	Section 6 Scoping Report
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.	Section 1 Scoping Report
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	
B1: Testing the OSS objectives against the SA framework.	Final SA report – Section 5
B2: Developing the OSS options.	Final SA report – Section 6
B3: Predicting the effects the OSS.	Final SA report – Section 7
B4: Evaluating the effects of the OSS.	Final SA report – Section 8
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects.	Final SA report – Section 8
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the OSS.	Final SA report – Section 9
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report	
C1: Preparing the SA Report.	Final SA report – this document comprises the SA final report
Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the OSS and SA Report	
D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the OSS and the SA Report.	To be undertaken Autumn 2006
D2 (i): Appraising significant changes.	
D2 (ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations.	
D3: Making decisions and providing information.	
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the OSS	
E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring.	To be undertaken Autumn 2006
E2: Responding to adverse effects.	

Table 2.2 Development of the Darlington OSS alongside the SA process

Period	OSS Process	SA Process
Summer 2005	Audit of all open spaces in Darlington	
December 2005	Production of Open spaces Baseline Report	
April /May 2006		Stage A (of the ODPM Guidance) - Scoping Report • Produced an SA Framework which is the basis for the assessment of the OSS.
June 2006		Consultation on the Scope of the SA
June - September 2006	Preparation of strategic options for the OSS. Preparation of Draft OSS. Consultation on the Draft OSS	Stage B • Preparation of Options. • Assessment of options against SA framework. • Mitigation and monitoring. Stage C Production of the SA Report

3   BACKGROUND TO THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL PROCESS

Purpose of Sustainability Appraisal

3.1   A Sustainability Appraisal is a method of assessing a plan to find out whether it is likely to promote a sustainable pattern of development, and where possible, avoid or mitigate any significant social, environmental or economic effects.

3.2   A plan that promotes sustainable development will be one that strikes a balance between the Government's five sustainable principles set out in the publication of Securing the Future Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy produced by DEFRA in 2005. The five UK Principles of Sustainable Development are:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibly; and
- Promoting good governance

3.3   The key aim of a SA is to make the plan process more transparent, better documented and more clearly focused on sustainability. The emergent Sustainability Appraisal process requires that policies are appraised against a range of criteria representing the objectives of sustainable development in national policy.

3.4   The purpose of the SA report is to enable us to identify any significant environmental, social and economic effects of a plan early on, thus enabling changes to be made if necessary.

Darlington Open spaces Strategy Objectives and Contents

3.5   The Open Spaces Strategy for Darlington Borough Council will set out the Council policies for the protection, management and maintenance of open space.

3.6   The vision statement for the OSS is:

"To provide, protect and enhance a variety of high quality accessible open green spaces throughout the Borough, linking with the cultural and natural heritage of the area that are:
- *Well designed and maintained*
- *Sustainable*
- *Safe*
- *Promote health/well being and enjoyment,*
Improving the quality of life for residents and visitors to the Borough.

3.7   The vision for the OSS will be delivered by aspiring to meet the following aims:

- To provide a sustainable amount of high quality, accessible open spaces across the Borough to meet the changing needs and expectations of local people, now and for the foreseeable future.

- To provide a variety of open spaces and facilities with unrestricted access that are equally accessible by all, where appropriate.

- To secure improvements in the design and management of open spaces, so that they are attractive and safe for everyone, enhance their recreational, biodiversity and aesthetic quality and conserve the Borough's distinctive history and culture.

- To build and sustain strong relationships with the local community and other agencies to help improve and shape change on open spaces.

Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Darlington OSS

3.8   The national sustainability objectives are used to focus the development of SA objectives that will be used to appraise the OSS. The SA must determine the significant impacts the OSS will have in relation to each of these criteria. This ensures the scope of the SA is appropriate with regard to the aspects of the environment that it considers.

3.9   Additionally the SA should have a scope or focus that is appropriate to the hierarchical level of the plan. The scope of the Darlington OSS is shaped or will need to be in conformity with the following policy guidance / development plan documents:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Planning Guidance 1: North East
- The Darlington Local Plan
- The Darlington Draft Core Strategy

3.10 The scope of the SA should also be informed by the remit of the plan. The OSS for Darlington can be defined to have a scope within the following remit:

- Assess supply and demand for open space considering the access to and quality of open spaces in Darlington Borough.
- Identify deficiencies in quality, quantity and access and plan how to remedy these deficiencies through open space enhancement, management, maintenance and disposal.
- The Strategy will focus on the quality of open spaces in terms of their recreational value, biodiversity value and aesthetic / landscape value.
- The Open Spaces Strategy will address these open space issues for the following types of open space:
  - Parks and gardens.
  - Natural and semi-natural greenspaces.

- o Children and Young People, with further subdivision for equipped children's play and youth provision.
- o Informal recreation space.
- o Landscape amenity space.
- o Green Corridors.
- o Outdoor Sports Facilities.
- o Allotments.
- o Cemeteries, churchyards, burial grounds.
- o Civic spaces.

3.11 This SA will appraise the spatial and land use changes proposed by the options for the OSS in terms of open space location, quantity, quality and accessibility for each open space type and will provide sustainable recommendations for the delivery of the preferred options for the OSS.

4   SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES, BASELINE AND CONTEXT

Introduction

4.1   In this section the evidence base is presented that will contribute to forming the SA framework in Section 5 of this report. It includes:

- A review of relevant policies, plans and programmes
- An assessment of the baseline environment of the open spaces in Darlington Borough
- Consideration of the sustainability issues and problems in open spaces in Darlington Borough

4.2   The purpose of the SA framework is to provide a toolkit for predicting the impact of the Darlington OSS options, the significance of the impact and a framework for monitoring the performance of the Darlington OSS during its lifetime.

4.3   This information formed the core of the Scoping Report (Appendix 1) and has been developed and refined in this report. The scoping report comments have been incorporated to ensure a robust SA framework is developed to ensure a comprehensive and effective appraisal of the OSS options.

Relevant plans and programmes

4.4   The main plans, programmes and strategies that are relevant to the Darlington OSS are set out in Appendix 4. Each plan and programme has been reviewed to determine its key objectives that are relevant to the plan and the implications of each relevant plan to OSS are also noted. This information has been used to inform the development of the SA objectives, sub objectives, indicators and targets in the SA framework.

Baseline Assessment

4.5   The baseline situation for the Open Spaces in Darlington must be determined in order to:

- Determine the characteristics of the plan area;
- Inform production of the Sustainability Objectives;
- Provide an evidence base to predict the effects the OSS options; and
- Provide an evidence base to monitor success of the OSS.

4.6   The distribution of the different typologies of open space for the main urban area of Darlington Borough, Heighington, Middleton St. George and Hurworth is given in the plans in Appendix 5.

Open Spaces in Darlington Borough – Baseline Situation

4.7   Darlington Borough Council has completed an audit of the 310 open spaces of 0.1ha or more in the main urban area of Darlington Borough. The audit examined the following:

- Provision of open spaces by type;
- Quantity and distribution of open spaces by type and location;
- Quality and value of the open spaces for each site by type and location (area); and,
- Accessibility of each open space type.

4.8   Details of the audit are included in Appendix 6. The audit will determine areas that are deficient in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility for open spaces types in Darlington and its main 3 villages.

4.9   In addition to the audit, other information sources have been used to determine the quality of the natural environment (designated sites) and historic environment (heritage sites) within all open spaces. This information has been compiled through records kept by Darlington Borough Council.

4.10   **Definitions for terminology used for Darlington's Open Spaces Audit**

- Quality – was assessed for all according to cleanliness and maintenance for all open spaces. In addition open spaces were assessed according to presence/quality of equipment and condition of paths. Biodiversity and sensory perception were considered on site where it was appropriate.
- Value – was assessed according to the type and density of housing the open space serves and its level of use, as well as according the features contained, including Tree Preservation Orders, listed buildings, conservation areas or Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.
- Accessibility – refers to the degree of public access permitted for the open space, e.g. whether it is unlimited, or by formal or informal agreement.
- Quantity – total provision in the Borough and provision per 1000 population.

Open Spaces Baseline Overview

General Provision

4.11   There are 310 open spaces of 0.1ha or more in the main urban area of Darlington Borough. This equates to 9.8ha open space per 1000 people. This reduces to 7.1 ha open space per 1000 people once golf courses and community woodland is excluded but it is still well above the 6.2ha per 1000 population, recommended by the National Playing Fields Association.

4.12   There is, however, extreme variation in open space provision between the areas of Darlington. There is much more open space in Darlington South West and in Haughton

than other urban areas, with some having virtually no open space such as North / Central Darlington.

4.13 Provision in the villages overall is below the Darlington average. Provision in Middleton St. George is similar to the overall Darlington average (8.9ha) but provision in Heighington and Hurworth is below the Darlington average (5.95ha and 6.36ha respectively).

Spatial Provision

4.14 Although open space provision is high at the Borough scale, at the local scale there are some areas of Darlington that have deficiencies in more than one of the main open space typologies. These areas include Cockerton West, Central, Lingfield, Eastbourne, Faverdale, Haughton East, Hammersknott, College and Park West.

4.15 A telephone survey carried out in 2003 showed that the majority of the population could access open space types within 15 minute walk and could reach their nearest open space within a 5 minute walk (68%). This figure dramatically decreases for the elderly population of which only 55% could reach their nearest open space within a 5 minute walk.

4.16 The majority of open spaces can be freely accessed (66% of open spaces). 23% of open spaces require formal or informal agreement to access the space and 11% of open spaces were not accessible at all. The inaccessible sites mainly comprised of outdoor sports facilities, natural and semi natural green space and landscape amenity spaces. The sites requiring formal and informal access mainly comprised of outdoor sports facilities, allotments and landscape amenity spaces.

General Quality

4.17 35% of sites are currently 1* and 2* quality and 19% are rated 4* quality or above. 46% of the sites are rated 3*. In terms of typology, natural and semi natural green spaces (43%), green corridors (45%) and spaces of landscape amenity (48%) have much more than 35% of their spaces scoring only 1* or 2*. At the other end of the scale cemeteries (41%), open spaces for children and young people and parks and gardens (33%) have much more than 19% of their spaces scoring 4* or 5*.

4.18 Plans 1 to 4 in Appendix 6 show the distribution of open spaces with their quality rating. Plan 1 shows there are concentrations of low quality sites (1* or 2*) in the following wards: Faverdale (8 of 17 open spaces), Lingfield (10 of 20 open spaces) and Haughton West (6 of 17 open spaces). The following wards have no high quality open spaces (4* or 5*): Haughton North, Lingfield, Bank Top and Lascelles. All these wards are in the east of the main urban area of Darlington, with Haughton West (1 high quality open space) and Haughton East (2 high quality open spaces) also performing poorly. Provision of high quality sites is strongest in the south and west of the main urban area in Eastbourne, Park West and Park East.

4.19   For Darlington's 3 largest villages, quality of open spaces is generally good or high with Hurworth and Heighington only having one open space of low quality and Middleton St. George having 4 open spaces of low quality.

Open Spaces Audit for Darlington – Recommendations for Open Spaces Strategy

4.20   The open spaces audit for Darlington concluded with the following required actions for the opens spaces in Darlington:
- More open spaces are required to meet the needs of older people;
- Need to stabilise or reduce provision for children and young people;
- Look at improving the quantity and/or quality and/or accessibility of open spaces where new housing developments are in the pipeline, through developer contributions;
- Ensure open spaces are available close to people's homes where people will want to carry out active recreation, e.g. jogging, dog-walking, kickabout;
- Give priority to achieving high quality open spaces in Bank Top Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles and Northgate wards;
- Place the highest value on all open spaces in the wards of Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Lascelles, North Road, Park East, Northgate and Pierremont;
- Affordable or free access to sports and play facilities most needed in Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Lascelles, Northgate and Park East wards.

Heritage and Environmental Features in Open Spaces

4.21   The following heritage and environmental features were determined in terms of their presence within, as part of or adjacent to open spaces in the main urban area of Darlington and the villages of Heighington, Hurworth and Middleton St. George.

4.22   Heritage features:
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Village Greens
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

4.23   Environmental features:
- Local Nature Reserves
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- National Designations (SSSI's)
- EU designated habitats (Great Crested Newts)
- Ancient Woodland
- Individual and groups of trees with Tree Preservation Orders

4.24   In Tables 8 to 13 in Appendix 6, all open spaces that have heritage and environmental designations are listed with their location and quality. All the open spaces in this list are considered to have high value in the open spaces audit apart from Faverdale Balancing Tank site which has medium value.

4.25   There are 13 open spaces that have listed buildings within them or adjacent to them, totalling 26 buildings. Most of these open spaces have a quality rating of 3* with some 4* sites. There are two open spaces that have a quality rating of 2*. They are Holy Trinity Church Yard and the open space at Russell Street Bridge.

4.26   Within 9 Conservation Areas there are 28 open spaces. Most of these open spaces are classified 3* or 4*. There are 6 open spaces that score 2* across 6 Conservation Areas. They include:
*   Open Space at Middleton Lane / Church Lane (Middleton One Row CA)
*   Outdoor sports space at Heighington (Heighington CA and HCA)
*   Riding School (Hurworth CA)
*   Brinkburn Dene Play Area and Park and Garden (Northgate CA)
*   Skerne Corridor (Victoria Embankment CA)
*   Holy Trinity church Yard (Stanhope Road / Grange Road CA)

4.27   There is only one Scheduled Ancient Monument in the open spaces of Darlington. The Coniscliffe Road Waterworks is in the River Tees Green corridor, which is rated 4*. There are 5 village greens classed as open spaces or are parts of open spaces. 3 of these are 4* and two are 3* quality.

4.28   There are 7 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) classed as open spaces and 14 open spaces that contain Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The majority of these sites are 3* quality with one site of 4* quality. 3 sites are of 1* quality (Horsefield Pond, Faverdale Balancing Pond, and McMullen Road Wetland) and one 2* site (Darchem Meadow). The open spaces with LNRs are all 3* quality apart from one 4* open space (Drinkfield LNR) and one 2* (Geneva Wood LNR).

4.29   There are 8 Great Crested Newt sites in open spaces in Darlington. Four of these sites are 1* or 2* quality. They include Faverdale Balancing Pond, Horsefield Pond, Faverdale Black Path Pond and Hundens Park.

4.30   There are no national designated environmental sites in open spaces in Darlington and no ancient woodlands within the urban areas or 3 largest villages.

Sustainability Issues and Problems

4.31   Table 4.1 outlines the social, environmental and economic issues and problems concerning open spaces in Darlington Borough. This list was compiled during a workshop session with the Darlington OSS SA forum group. The SA forum group consists of representatives from across the following groups within the Council whose input will ensure all the relevant problems and issue have been considered.
*   Sustainability
*   Planning Policy
*   Parks and Open Spaces
*   Social Inclusion and Inequalities

- Countryside and Rights of Way
- Primary Care Trust
- Community representatives

4.32 Additionally the open spaces audit has been used to determine any quality, quantity and access issues and problems.

4.33 In Table 4.2 the main open space issues and problems emerging from a range of community consultations in Darlington Borough have been listed against the headings of:
- Quantity of Provision
- Quality
- Access
- Utility
- Safety

Table 4.1: Sustainability Issues and Problems for Darlington's Open Spaces

Issue / Problem	Source of information
Economic	
There is a gap in funding and the quality standards that are expected across all open spaces in the Borough. This poses the following conundrum – should the existing amount of open space be maintained at a lower quality than expected or should the amount of open space be reduced so it can be maintained at a higher quality.	SA Forum Workshop
Social	
Where terraced housing and flats predominate (including Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Lascelles, North Road, Northgate and Pierremont wards), people are likely to have far less access to private outside areas for quiet enjoyment and children's play. Public open spaces in these areas are therefore very important.	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
For family orientated or larger destination parks, the provision of toilets and adequate parking is important.	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
The Bangladeshi community has been worried about noisy, sometimes racist, behaviour of people in North Lodge Park	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
Significant increases in the proportion of the population over retirement age are projected, to more than one in four by 2021, and the working age population is also projected to grow older. Older people particularly appreciate places for quiet enjoyment, such as parks, gardens and allotments that are close to where they live.	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
The number of children aged 5-15 years is projected to decline by 8.1% in the period 2005-2021, with a slight decline in 0-4 year olds in the same period. The highest numbers of children 0-4 years are found in Park East,	Open spaces Audit for Darlington

Harrowgate Hill, Pierremont, Eastbourne, North Road and Northgate and for 5-14 year olds it is the same but including Haughton West and Cockerton East wards. This should be considered in the provision of open space for young people.	
There is a lack of community involvement in the planning and management of open spaces.	SA Forum Workshop
There are access difficulties for vulnerable people who wish to use formal open spaces.	SA Forum Workshop
Vandalism and crime are a problem for some open spaces which deters the perceived safety and appeal of these places for use.	SA Forum Workshop
Perceptions of how open space should be maintained can cause problems in terms of maintaining the biodiversity value of spaces as biodiversity is often best in overgrown areas that can be perceived as unkempt. Need to educate the public on the varying uses of open space.	SA Forum Workshop
Environmental	
Some types of open space, such as green corridors, amenity greenspace, civic spaces and cemeteries only tend to be provided where the opportunity (e.g. green corridors along the becks) or specific needs (e.g. landscape buffer) arise. Therefore increasing provision will not always be possible.	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
There is variability in quantity of open space across the Borough and across the typologies.	SA Forum Workshop
Variability in quality of open space across the Borough and across the typologies.	SA Forum Workshop
Variability in distribution of open space – for example in densely populated areas there is little scope for open space and some types of open space occur only where they can, for example nature reserves are peripheral.	SA Forum Workshop
Maintenance of open space needs to be prioritised	SA Forum Workshop
Some open spaces lacking in biodiversity value.	SA Forum Workshop
Provision in some areas is restricted by lack of space.	SA Forum Workshop
Need to consider open space provision when new developments are built – open space should be factored in to maintain adequate provision.	SA Forum Workshop
The biodiversity value of designated sites (some of which are in open spaces) in Darlington is yet to be determined and is thus currently unknown.	SA Forum Workshop
Several SNCIs and Great Crested Newt habitats are in open spaces that are of low quality (1* or 2*)	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
Several open spaces in conservation areas or with listed buildings with in them are of low quality (2*)	Open spaces Audit for Darlington
There are some open spaces in Conservation Areas that are of poor quality (1* or 2*) and two listed buildings are in or adjacent to open spaces that are poor quality.	Open spaces Audit for Darlington

Table 4.2: Community Survey for Open Spaces Audit

Aspect of open space	Comment
Quantity of Provision	73.2% of people are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the provision of parks and open spaces in their local area. The current mosaic of built areas and open spaces in Darlington gives a sense of always being close to green areas. This valuable characteristic should be preserved. Some people felt that any provision standards should take account of the character of an area, e.g. the amount of private greenspace (gardens) in each locality, and that population growth should mean more provision of open space. Only 55% of retired people could reach their nearest green space within a 5 minute walk, compared with over two thirds of all respondents.
Quality	The community feels open spaces add value to environmental assets and to the perception and appeal of the area for residents, business and visitors. Greater attention needs to be paid to general aesthetics (litter, fly-tipping, etc), better maintenance of equipment and amenities. Several commented that even the smallest opens spaces need some features; mown grass is featureless and can be bleak. Many open spaces are untidy and uncared for, e.g. shrubs need trimming, gaps in boundary railings. Just under one in six of those surveyed mentioned that of a range of Council facilities in their neighbourhood, parks and open spaces need improving more than other aspects of their area.
Utility	There is strong support for the protection of open spaces, including specifically playing fields, and features within open spaces, e.g. trees, flora and fauna. New and improved play facilities and places for young people to meet and 'kickabout' are widely sought by adults and young people alike. The fishing lakes at Brinkburn and Maidendale are increasingly popular, but other suggestions included equipment that provides element of danger in a controlled environment, e.g. off-road motorbiking, not boring and safe facilities as in many parks, plus lighting to allow use in the winter. There is some concern about the misuse of play areas for anti-social behaviour, e.g. drinking and drug use, and some intolerance of play by neighbours, e.g. complaints about noise and requesting 'no ball games' signs when only a few children play football.
Access	Some felt that main roads can be a significant barrier to accessing open spaces, especially children's play spaces, and that improvement to existing space or the creation of new space should recognise the need to promote easy access by non-car modes of transport to improve accessibility and social inclusion.

	75% or more people expected to travel 15 minutes to parks and gardens, informal recreation, natural and semi natural greenspace, open space for children and young people and allotments. 75% or more people expected to travel 30 minutes to outdoor sports facilities, green corridors, cemeteries and civil spaces.
Safety	People want better safety and security including more park keepers / wardens, better lighting and CCTV.

The SA Framework

4.34   The scope of the SA of the OSS outlined in Section 3 and the information gathered from the relevant plans and programmes, the baseline situation and the issues and problems that have been outlined in this section, have been use to develop the SA Framework that is described in the following section of this report.

5   SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

5.1   The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is essentially a 'toolkit' with which to assess the sustainability of the emerging Darlington Borough Open Spaces Strategy. The SA framework can be found in Appendix 7.

5.2   The SA framework includes the following elements:
- SA objectives
- SA sub-objectives
- Indicators
- Evidence Base
- Targets

SA Objectives

5.3   Darlington Borough Council has produced a comprehensive set of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and Indicators for Darlington. Many of the objectives are not relevant to the OSS because of the nature and focus of OSS. Therefore the comprehensive list of objectives has been refined using the following information:
- The scope of the SA defined in Section 2;
- The objectives of the relevant plans and programmes defined in Section 3;
- The baseline characteristics of Open Spaces in Darlington as defined in Section 4; and,
- The environmental and sustainability issues and problems in Section 5.

5.4   The SA objectives are vitally important to appraising SA process of the OSS as the OSS proposals will be appraised against them to define the sustainability of the document.

SA sub-objectives

5.5   Each SA objective has been given a set of sub-objectives. Sub-objectives have been identified to determine how the plan objectives are achieved.

5.6   Similarly to the objectives, the sub-objectives have been developed and refined using with the information listed in point 5.3.

5.7   The sub-objectives will help inform the indicators that are used to reflect the baseline situation in relation to each of the SA objectives.

5.8   The sustainability objectives and sub-objectives can be found in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Sustainability Objectives and Sub-Objectives

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1. To promote community safety	Reduce crime and fear of crime Reduce anti social behaviour
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 2. To encourage a healthy lifestyle with good accessibility to sport, play and recreation and reduce inequalities in health Sustainability	Improve access to health, active leisure and recreational facilities Promote a healthy living environment Help mental health and improve well being Improve and intensify use of facilities or access to facilities Provide accessibility to indoor and outdoor leisure activity and facilities to promote an increase in physical activity Improve the biodiversity value of open spaces
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 3. To promote strong and inclusive communities	Narrow the inequality gap Build community confidence Increase public involvement Improve access to services
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 4. To promote an increase in trips by walking, cycling and public transport	Increase opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 5. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	Improve the environmental quality of open spaces to stimulate and enhance biodiversity Protect and enhance natural habitats and species
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 6. To promote access to the quality countryside and open spaces	Improve the countryside, parks and open spaces Provide better recreation and play facilities
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 7. To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings	Safeguard and enhance buildings and areas of archaeological, architectural heritage or historical importance and their setting. Safeguard and enhance areas of important townscapes, including the public realm and their setting. Improve the quality of design in new

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives
	developments.
	Promote and enhance the unique and special character of the Darlington countryside.
	Promote and enhance access to and understanding of heritage assets and engage local communities.
	Secure the sustainability of heritage buildings and assets through economic uses and tourism uses in a manner sympathetic to their historic context.

SA Indicators and Targets

5.9   Plan indicators and targets are individual statistics that allow the SA objectives and OSS to be measured and monitored.

5.10 The indicators and targets have been informed by targets set in the relevant plans and programmes outlined in Section 4. In addition a series of additional reports and databases have been used to determine further appropriate indicators and targets. The plans, programmes, reports and databases used to inform the indicators and targets are identified in Appendix 4.

5.11 Indicators have only been included in the SA framework if there is information readily available so that it can be collected and monitored easily.

5.12 Relevant baseline data is given against each SA indicator. The baseline data will indicate the current situation and, where data is available, trends that have occurred over recent years within the area.

5.13 This will give an indication of the direction of change within the baseline as well as providing a base for monitoring the success of the OSS over time by comparing the baseline situation for each indicator to its associated target.

5.14 The SA framework has the capacity to include national and regional level data. This data can act as a useful comparator where trends in the baseline are not available. National and regional level data is not useful for all indicators, where this is the case 'N/A' appears in the SA framework.

Appraisal and Monitoring

5.15 The baseline situation in the SA framework provides an analysis of the social, environmental and economic conditions of the study area and acts as the benchmark with

which to inform and appraise individual OSS options and provide a mechanism with which to measure the success of the OSS overall.

5.16   The information contained within the baseline has been collected and collated from a number of sources that include:
- National, regional and local planning and regeneration guidance and strategies;
- Authorities with Environmental Responsibility; and
- National, regional, local and super output level statistics from the Office of National Statistics.
- The Darlington open spaces audit

5.17   The source for each piece of baseline data is given in the far right column of the SA Framework. Further work will be undertaken on the baseline as part of the SA process.

Data Collection Limitations

5.18   The majority of the baseline data regarding open spaces has come from the Darlington Open Spaces audit. While this audit provides detailed data regarding the current quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces, a 'snap shot' of current conditions. It does not determine trends in the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Darlington.

5.19   Many indicators in the generic Darlington SA framework are not specific enough to be meaningful monitoring tools for open spaces. Some indicators consequently had to be altered and some had to be deleted. Additional indicators were created to ensure there were adequate indicators for each objective.

5.20   Some indicators in the SA framework have the capacity to be measured but are not yet measured specifically for the purposes of monitoring open spaces. Therefore this data is not yet available but will be built into the SA framework in the future.

5.21   As the plan has a specific and well defined scope some data required was not available limiting the indicators that could be included in the SA framework.

5.22   The SA framework has the capacity to include regional and national level data. This data can serve (but not always) as a useful comparator to the Borough level data and is useful when there are no trends in the data available. However, data collected at different scales is not always available, thus there are gaps in the SA framework.

6   TESTING THE PLAN OBJECTIVES AGAINST THE SA OBJECTIVES (Task B1)

Introduction

6.1   The objectives of the OSS must be in accordance with sustainability principles. To be able to achieve this, the OSS objectives must be tested against the SA objectives to understand their compatibility. The observations made when making the appraisal will be taken into account in the refinement of the OSS options.

6.2   This process has been undertaken by BDP and reviewed by OSS SA Forum (see Section 2). Each member of the OSS SA Forum has appraised the SA / OSS objectives that are most relevant to their professional expertise and knowledge. The combined knowledge of the SA Forum Group has ensured that all key issues have been considered for the objectives appraisal.

6.3   In order to test the objectives, an appraisal matrix was produced by BDP. The appraisal matrix can be found in Appendix 8. The SA objectives are set out across the vertical axis of the matrix and the OSS objectives down the horizontal axis. The appraisal itself was carried out using the following scoring mechanism to assess the impact of the objectives against one another. The rationale behind each score is given in the matrix where further elaboration is required.

++	Likely to be a very positive impact/highly compatible
+	Likely to be a positive impact/compatible
O	Likely to be a neutral impact/neither compatible or incompatible
-	Likely to be a negative impact/conflict
--	Likely to be a very negative impact/strong conflict
?	Impact not known/unclear

6.4   When scoring the compatibility between the objectives the following factors are taken into consideration:
- The principles behind the plan objectives and the SA objectives
- The baseline situation in Darlington's Open Spaces in relation to the SA objectives
- The sustainability issues and problems in Darlington's Open Spaces.

Objectives Appraisal Summary and Implications

6.5   The appraisal tests the compatibility of the 4 OSS objectives with the 7 SA objectives. The results show only 2 potential conflicts arose from 28 compatibility cross checks between the SA and OSS objectives. The conflicts are discussed in Table 6.1 to determine if they can be resolved and their significance in terms of the OSS.

Table 6.1 Significance of conflicting SA and OSS objectives

Conflicting Objectives	Significance	Conflict Resolved?
SA Objective **To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings**	Provision of a sustainable amount of open space in Darlington could result in loss of some open space. This could have a negative impact on local distinctiveness and setting.	Yes
OSS Objective **To provide a sustainable amount of high quality, accessible open spaces across the Borough to meet the changing needs and expectations of local people, now and for the foreseeable future**	This conflict can be resolved through careful disposal of open spaces. Each site should be considered individually against a range of criteria, including landscape value, before it is disposed of.	
SA Objective **To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings**	Providing a variety of more accessible open spaces could result in changes in the uses of open spaces to meet access needs for each open space type. Some open spaces can detract from landscape value such as creating sports field from a natural site.	Yes
OSS Objective **To provide a variety of open spaces and facilities with unrestricted access, where appropriate, which are equally accessible by all.**	When converting open spaces to different types of uses the landscape impact on the surrounding area should be carefully considered with negative impacts mitigated through landscaping.	

6.6   Table 6.1 shows the main conflicts arise from:

- Disposal of open spaces to achieve a more sustainable amount of open space.
- Changing open spaces types to meet local open space needs.

6.7   These factors could have implications for setting and landscape value within and adjacent to the open space.

6.8   The discussion of the conflicts does show that both conflicts that arise can be resolved though amendments to the plan and potential mitigation measures.

7   IDENTIFICATION OF OPTIONS (Task B2)

Introduction

7.1   Sustainability Appraisal requires the consideration of reasonable, realistic and relevant options. The options developed need to be sufficiently distinct to enable meaningful comparisons between the implications of each option.

7.2   The identification of options for the SA of the OSS is informed by the remit of the plan. The OSS for Darlington has the following remit, as identified in Section 3 of this report:

- Assess supply and demand for open space considering the access to and quality of open spaces in Darlington Borough.
- Identify deficiencies in quality, quantity and access and plan how to remedy these deficiencies through open space enhancement, management, maintenance and disposal.
- The Open Spaces Strategy will focus on the quality of open spaces in terms of their recreational value, biodiversity value and aesthetic / landscape value.
- The Open Spaces Strategy will address these open space issues for the following types of open space:
    o   Parks and gardens.
    o   Natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
    o   Children and Young People, with further subdivision for equipped children's play and youth provision.
    o   Informal recreation space.
    o   Landscape amenity space.
    o   Green Corridors.
    o   Outdoor Sports Facilities.
    o   Allotments.
    o   Cemeteries, churchyards, burial grounds.
    o   Civic spaces.

7.3   This remit has been used to inform the development of 3 options for the SA of OSS. The 3 options vary in terms of the extent of intervention for the management of open spaces in the main urban area Darlington Borough.

- **Option 1** (Existing Policy) – Existing local plan policy – No Open Spaces Strategy ('do nothing' option).

- **Option 2** (Proposed Approach for the OSS) – Step change from local plan policy; considers a wider range of open space issues such as quality and accessibility as well as provision. Also considers the importance of open space types according to how they function and catchment area.

- **Option 3** (Alternative Approach) – Takes the policies given in proposed approach and generally adds further polices or slightly amends Proposed Approach policy. In some cases this option implies higher level of intervention and aspiration than the Proposed Approach.

7.4   Option 1 is the continuation of existing open spaces policy set out in the Darlington Local Plan 1997 (2002 revision). It has a restricted focus which includes policies for a limited number of open space types and does not include quality or access standards for the open space types in its remit. In terms of provision of new open spaces, Option 1 sets standards for provision for new residential development and requires landscaping in 3 major industrial areas. This option does not include policies for open spaces in the villages.

7.5   Option 2 is the proposed approach for the draft OSS. It focuses on improving the quality of open spaces to create more top quality open spaces (4* and 5* sites). This will be at the expense of lower value open spaces, some of which will be disposed of. This option sets quantity, quality and access standards for a wider range of open space sites than Local Plan policy. Option 2 sets standards for open spaces provision for a wider range of employment sites than the Local Plan policy (informed by the Darlington Gateway Strategy) and has a flexible approach to provision of open spaces in new residential development through negotiation according to need. This option sets the same overall quality standards for open spaces across the urban area and 3 largest villages and assesses quantity requirements according to local need.

7.6   Option 3 focuses on improving the overall quality of open spaces so all open spaces in the Borough are at least 3* and the current quantity of open spaces in the Borough will be retained. This will be at the expense of creating no additional high quality sites. This option sets the same quantity, quality and access standards for the same range of open space sites as Option 2 but in some cases sets slightly more aspirational access standards. Option 3 sets the same standards for open spaces provision for the same range of employment sites and has the same approach to provision of open spaces in new residential development as Option 2, but in addition it provides the option of contribution to strategic provision of open spaces where local provision is adequate. For open spaces in the villages, Option 3 sets slightly lower overall quality and quantity standards than the urban area.

7.7   Table 7.1 gives the detailed policy for each of the 3 options.

7.8   These options were developed by Darlington Borough Council and reviewed by the OSS SA Forum during a workshop on July 21st. During this workshop the options were amended to ensure the 3 options incorporate a fair and reasonable range of measures to sustainably deliver the objectives of the OSS within the remit of what an OSS can reasonably deliver. The content of the initial 3 options before the OSS SA Forum during a workshop on July 21st can be found in Appendix 9. It demonstrates that the SA process has informed the development of options for the OSS.

Table 7.1 Detailed policies for Options 1, 2 and 3

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
General Approach	The Local Plan open space policies for Recreation, Leisure and Community focus on providing and safeguarding open space amounts, locations and forms suited to sporting, recreation and play needs of all residents and their access. Other Local Plan policies for Environment are also applicable which focus on retaining and enhancing the amenity value of open space. Policy overview: • There are no policies for the villages. • Does not include policies for all open space types, generally excludes sports sites. • Same protection for sites whether they are strategic or local.	Address inequalities in open spaces by providing more open spaces in deficient areas. Focus on improving and cherishing most valuable open spaces, working in partnership to enhance open spaces. Dispose of low value open spaces in areas where there is an excess of sites.	Improve the poorest quality open spaces, i.e. bottom up approach. Will not increase the number of 4* or 5* open spaces in the Borough, but will bring all sites to at least 3* - will maintain the current number of open spaces sites.
Protecting and caring for existing valuable open spaces	LP Policy E3: In considering proposals to develop any area of open land within the urban development limit, the council will seek to maintain the usefulness and enhance the appearance and nature conservation interest of open spaces. Development will not be granted permission that will inflict harm on: • Visual relief • Character and appearance of a locality • Sports facilities meeting the standard set in Policy R4 • Formal recreation / informal recreation facilities or horticulture • Internal continuity or linkages with open countryside • Areas recognised for their nature conservation / wildlife interest.	Will identify a top tier of locally important open space sites, with more robust policy protection: Locally Important Open Spaces include: a. Parks and cemeteries b. Local Nature Reserves c. Green wedges d. Paths within the Borough forming part of the Teesdale Way e. Community woodlands f. Darlington Railway Museum and undeveloped sections of the Stockton & Darlington Railway trackbed g. The Market Place and High Row in Darlington town centre h. Village greens i. Strategic outdoor sports provision These open spaces will be given high value status	-

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
	Existing approach set out in LP Policy E3. Protected sites will be limited to those sites designated in the 'Open Land Network'.	Open space safeguarding will be related to function, need and value. Criteria required to be met in order to justify the redevelopment of all or part of existing open spaces split into sites that are locally important and those that are not. Development will only be permitted on Locally Important Open Spaces if either: • The development is ancillary to the existing open space use; or • The development of a small part of the site will enable the enhancement of the remaining open space, and there is no identified shortfall in the amount of any type of open space for which the open space could appropriately be used; And the development can be achieved without inflicting material net harm on: • The visual relief afforded by the open space network as a whole; • The openness and greenery of the locality; • The internal continuity of the open space system, or its linkages with the open countryside. Only in the most exceptional circumstances will alternative provision of open space, that is equivalent or better in terms of size, quality, usefulness, attractiveness and accessibility, be permitted. The redevelopment of all or part of an existing open space which is not a locally important open space will only be permitted if: • It has been clearly shown in a robust and up-to-date needs assessment that the open space is surplus to all open space, sport or recreation provision requirements, or by its nature, is unsuitable to meet any identified deficiency in open space, sport and recreation provision; or • Alternative equivalent or better provision in terms of size, usefulness, quality and attractiveness is made that is at least as accessible as the existing open space to the population it serves or potentially serves; or	To provide more detail about types and quality of open spaces identified in Local Plan Policy E3.
		Criteria for schemes involving redevelopment of open space: Draft OSS Policy 5:Where the redevelopment of open space complies with Policy 3, schemes must be designed to sustain or enhance: • Any strategic function the open space performs; and • The overall visual amenity of the locality; and • Any contribution that the site makes to local biodiversity objectives. This may be achieved by retaining elements of the existing open space or by making compensatory provision.	

| Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
Standards for open space provision	Based on LP Policy E4: The Council will seek to ensure that all forms of recreational open space within the urban area maintain a standard of 3.6ha per 1000 population. This should be broken down as follows for major open space serving a town wide population: 　1.　Playing pitches for youth and adult use – 1.6ha 　2.　Informal / Passive recreational use – 0.8ha For local open space serving a neighbourhood population: 　1.　Children's play – equipped playgrounds – 0.2ha 　2.　Children's play – areas for active games – 0.4ha 　3.　Informal / Passive recreation use – 0.6ha The Council will also seek to ensure that an entrance to an open space equipped for children's play lies within 400m safe walk of every dwelling.	Within the main urban area, the provision of open space will be maintained and improved to achieve the following overall standards: • 6.5ha of open space per 1000 people, of which 6.2ha per 1000 people is accessible; • An accessible open space of at least 0.1ha within 300m of 99% of dwellings; • 70% of open spaces to be 3 star (medium) quality or above, with at least a quarter (25%) to be 4 star (good) quality or above. Between the 5 sub areas within the main urban area the proportion of medium and good quality sites should not vary more by more 15% between all the sub areas (see figure 7.1 for plan of urban sub areas). See Theme 4 for breakdown details for quantity, quality and accessibility for each open space type.	7.1ha/1000 population (existing level) 60% of 3 star quality or above maintaining all existing sites.
Strategies for specific types of open spaces • Parks	Existing commitments to maintain strategic role of South Park and to develop West Park.	Four strategic parks at North Park, South Park, West Park and the Denes, and a network of high quality local parks serving the east of the urban area. (see figure 7.2 for location plan) In the eastern part of the urban area, the following sites will be targeted to fulfil the role of good quality local parks and informal recreation areas: *Short/medium term* • Lascelles/Eastbourne Park • Red Hall Recreation Area • Land next to Maidendale Community Centre • Land to the rear of Gouldsmith Gardens, Haughton • Salters Lane North/Lytham Road, Harrowgate Hill (see figure 7.2 for location plan) *Medium/long term* • Tommy Crooks Park and recreation land to the south • Skerne Valley, Haughton West • Springfield Park • Parkland proposed at Central Park • *Possible park provision if houses approved at Lingfield Point ?* (see figure 7.2 for location plan)	As proposed approach, but create an additional strategic park within the eastern part of the urban area related to the opening up of development sites alongside the Eastern Transport Corridor.

| Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
• Children & Young People	No distinction between strategic and local play sites. Accessibility standard of 400m from all homes for equipped play. Management/maintenance according to identified local needs and condition of equipment or facilities. Accessibility of 600m straight line distance without crossing A or B road included in Children's Play SPG.	Identification of strategic and local play areas. Provision for children – 1 equipped play site for every 450 children under 12 years and accessibility standard of 10 min walk (400m straight line distance) for 85% of children. Provision of 1 recreation area of at least 3 star quality for every 500 young people under 17 years old, and to bring 99% of the population within 15 minutes walk (or 1000m) of a young people's recreation area.	Accessibility standard of within 300m of 85% of children for equipped play areas.
• Outdoor Sports Facilities	No accessibility standard, except for playing pitches (i.e. only cricket, rugby, football, hockey). Playing pitch standard of 1.6ha/1000 people, though not specifically accessible for community use.	Introduction of accessibility standard (1000m from all homes). Playing pitch standard of 1.05ha accessible playing pitches/1000 people. Securing greater use of existing facilities: • Access to school playing fields at evenings and weekends; and • Increase public usage of private sports clubs.	-
• Natural and Semi-natural Open Spaces	LP Policy R12: So as to encourage public access to open land and the countryside, the existing network of public rights of way will be extended and the new recreation routes will be created. Routes should improve access from built-up areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and horse-riders. LP Policy R13: The Council will aim (where appropriate in the interests of amenity, convenience or nature conservation) to link open space footpath and landscape provisions with adjoining provisions creating interconnecting networks of open space.	The quality of semi-natural and natural greenspaces will be raised so that 75% of sites for which this is the primary purpose are 3* quality or above, and 20% are of 4* quality or above. Quantity standard of 5ha/1000 people. Accessibility - 60% people in urban area within 9 minutes walk (600m) of a site. Identifies a future strategic countryside site in the Barmpton Lane/Skerningham area.	75% accessibility standard. Would require some deeply urban open spaces to be managed as nature sites, rather than as currently. One large countryside site rather than two smaller sites (e.g. Merrybent) will result in lower quantity standard than proposed option of 4.6ha/1000.
• Informal Recreation	LP policy R4: 1.4ha/1000 population (Existing provision is 6.17ha/1000). Where major open space is serving a town wide population 0.8ha must be provided for informal/passive recreation. Where local open space is serving a neighbourhood population 0.6ha must be provided for informal/passive recreation. No quality or accessibility standard.	Reduce existing quantity to 6.0ha/1000 population One space within 300m of 99% homes Quality of all primary sites at least 3*. 20% of sites to 4*.	6.17ha/1000 population – maintain existing

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
• Other Types of Open Space	No existing standards for these in Local Plan policies.	Within the main urban area, the overall provision of specific types of open space will be maintained and improved to achieve the following standards: (i) Allotments: 95% population within 15 minutes walk (1000m) of at least one allotment site. (ii) Green corridors: All primary sites to be 3* quality or above. (iii) Landscape amenity: 70% of sites to be 3* quality or above. (iv) Cemeteries: All publicly accessible sites to be 4* quality or above. (v) Civic spaces: All sites to be 5* quality.	Addition of quantity standards.
Open space provision associated with new development	LP Policy R6: New residential developments of ten or more dwellings should make provision for open space for recreation, providing a minimum standard of 1.2ha per 1000 population.	Open space provision with all developments of 5 dwellings or more.	-
	LP Policy R7 New development should meet the following requirements in terms of open space: • Open space for informal use of 0.6ha per 1000 population / 6m² per bed space • Areas for children's active games - 0.4ha per 1000 population / 4m² per bed space • Equipped children's playgrounds - 0.2ha per 1000 population / 2m² per bed space	Site by site negotiation of amount and size of open space provision, based on identified local needs as well as those arising from the development, and taking account of nature of site.	Set standards for contributions to deliver strategic need when local need is adequate. Set a minimum contribution level to ensure some contribution is made.

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
	LP Policy EP6 Development of employment sites in open land will be required to achieve a high standard of design and landscaping with regard to the following employment areas: Yarn road Industrial Area Faverdale Industrial Area Heighington Lane Business Park Extension	Framework for negotiating greenspace provision or contributions towards provision off-site in association with some employment development: Encourage developers to include natural and semi-natural elements in any schemes they draw up, and to recognise the role that spaces around buildings can have in providing routes to/from the countryside and main built up area, e.g. by designing in green corridors. The policy is limited to developments on strategic employment sites, and these will be identified in the Darlington Gateway Strategy, which is currently being prepared separately. Provision of open space within employment development (LDF Development Policies) The Council will seek the provision of accessible greenspace as part of any developments on strategic employment sites. These greenspaces must be laid out and maintained to: (i) Achieve a high standard of design and landscaping, particularly on prominent frontages; (ii) Reflect any pedestrian desire lines through the site; (iii) Provide a local informal recreational space for employees; and (iii) Contribute to the achievement of the overall open space standard set out in Policy 5. The use of natural and semi-natural features and native species within the landscaping scheme is encouraged. Exceptionally, where provision cannot be made on site, the Council may accept a contribution towards the enhancement of other existing open spaces nearby.	-
Approach for the villages	Local plan open space policy applies within the urban development limit, thus there are no open spaces policies in the Local Plan for the villages.	No specific quantity standards. Overall quality standards (not by open space type) as per the urban area: • 70% of sites are maintained at 3 star (medium) quality or above, with at least a quarter (25%) maintained at 4 star (good) quality or above. Working with Parish Councils and local communities to address identified specific needs.	Set overall quality and quantity standards (not by open space type) that are slightly lower than for the main urban area, to reflect the absence of parks, and the additional countryside recreation opportunities presented by the existing Public Rights of Way Network.

Figure 7.1 Urban sub area division of Darlington
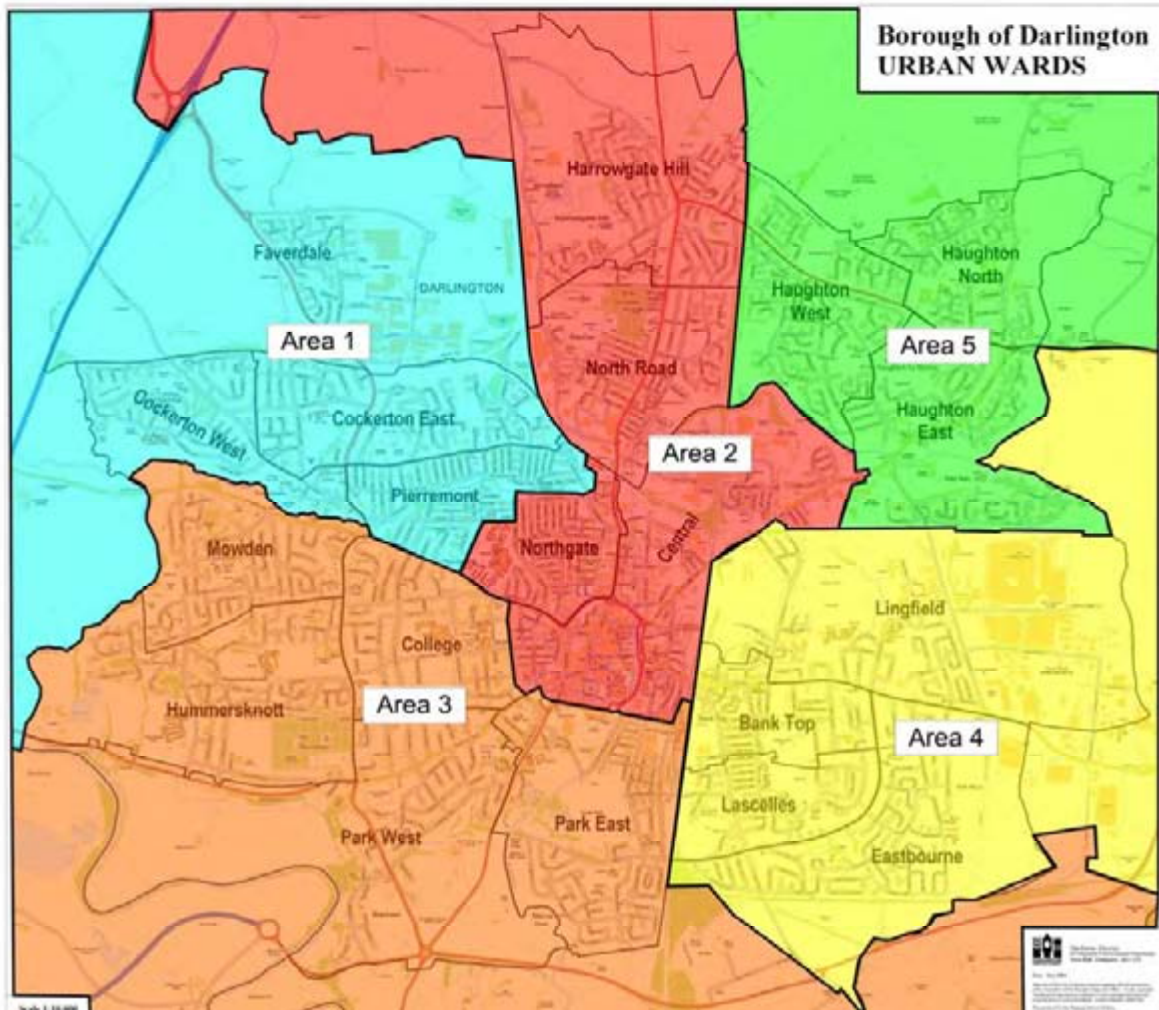
Figure 7.2 Location of strategic and local parks and locations for new parks for Option 2
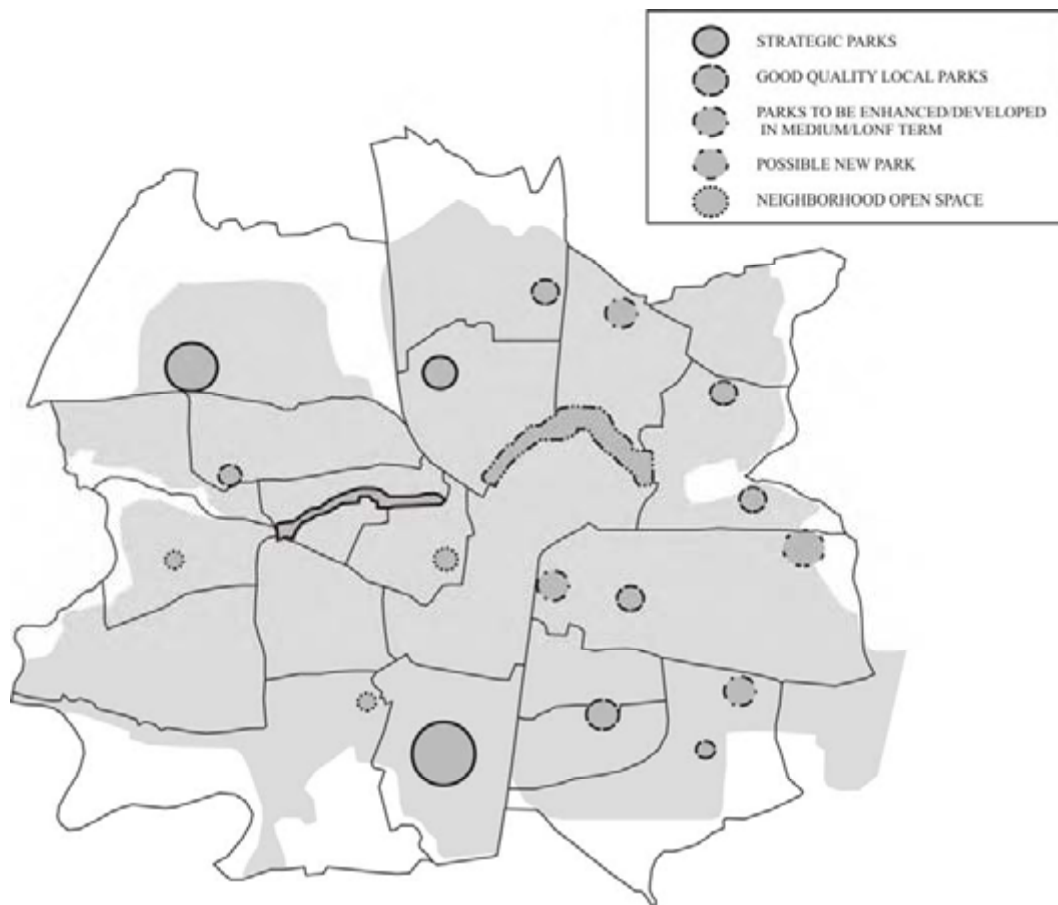
8   PREDICTING THE EFFECTS OF THE PLAN – OPTIONS APPRAISAL (Task B3)

Options Appraisal against the SA Objectives

8.1   The Options developed for the OSS have been revised to take into account the findings of the SA. Options 1, 2 and 3 have been appraised against the SA objectives in an appraisal matrix. The appraisal matrix can be found in Appendix 10.

8.2   The appraisal of the Options was undertaken by BDP and reviewed by the Darlington OSS Forum. Each member of the Darlington OSS Forum appraised the aspects of the options that are most relevant to their professional expertise and knowledge and their understanding of the main issues related to their professional expertise in the study area itself. The combined knowledge of the SA Forum Group has ensured that all key issues have been considered for the options appraisal.

8.3   Options appraisal is the beginning of the process to identify and later appraise the preferred policy option to be published for public consultation.

8.4   However, it is important to note that it is not the role of the SA to determine which of the options should be chosen as the basis for consultation. The role of the SA is to assist with the identification of the appropriate options, by highlighting the sustainability implications and putting forward recommendations for improvement of the different options.

8.5   The scoring system which identifies whether certain options are likely to have a positive, negative or neutral impact in terms of sustainability is given below.

Symbol	Impact	Score
++	Likely to be a very positive impact	2
+	Likely to be a positive impact	1
O	Likely to be a neutral impact	0
-	Likely to be a negative impact	-1
--	Likely to be a very negative impact	-2

Table 8.1 The main positive and negative impacts of each option

	Positive	Negative
Option 1 **Score: -13**	• Encourages walking and cycling to open spaces through extension of the public rights of way network and the creation of new recreation routes and by improving access to open spaces from residential areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists.	• Does not include all open space types defined in the open spaces audit which could lead to a lack of protection for these open space types that could result in loss of some open spaces. • Unlikely to improve quality of the poor quality (1* or 2*) open spaces in Darlington (33% of all open spaces) due to a lack of quality standards set. • Unlikely to improve access to open spaces in areas that suffer from access inequalities due to a lack of access standards set. • Unlikely to improve quality of the poor quality open spaces that contain Great Crested Newt Habitat or are designated as SNCIs. • Unlikely to contribute to the improvement poor quality open spaces that are important for the setting and quality of rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes (includes 2 listed buildings and 6 conservation areas). • Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups.
Option 2 **Score: +8**	• This option will address inequalities in open space provision in terms of high quality sites. • This option will improve accessibility of all open spaces types. • This option will address inequalities in open space provision for defined open space types through the creation of new open spaces and by changing usage of open spaces to meet need for different open space types. • This option will indirectly improve the quality of open spaces with biodiversity value and open spaces with landscape and townscape value through general improvement of the quality of open spaces.	• While this option improves open spaces it does not consider access in terms of reaching and entering the open space. This could result in some groups being excluded from using open spaces or could result in an increase in usage of cars to reach open spaces. • Changing open space types to meet need could have a detrimental impact on landscape and townscape setting if a bland sports pitch is created from an aesthetically pleasing open space. • Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups. • Biodiversity is not considered an important indicator of the quality of all types of open space so not all open spaces will have improved biodiversity value as a consequence of improved quality. • There is the potential for some open spaces that contribute to

		townscape/landscape setting to be lost.
		• Disposal of low value open spaces could be misleading as open spaces perceived as low quality, at the neighbourhood level that could be considered as valuable and if they were maintained at a higher quality they could be perceived as higher value.
Option 3 **Score:** **+3**	• This option will improve the quality of some of the low quality sites to 3* quality. • This option will improve accessibility of all open spaces types (to a greater extent than option 2). • This option will address inequalities in open space provision for defined open space types through the creation of new open spaces and by changing usage of open spaces to meet needs. • This option will bring the quality of low quality open spaces with biodiversity value and open spaces with landscape and townscape value from 1* or 2* to 3*.	• Some open spaces could become degraded, under used and the focus of anti social behaviour due to a lack of resources to manage all the open spaces in Darlington that this option retains. • Current inequalities in terms of the distribution of high quality open spaces will remain under this option. • This option will not improve open spaces with biodiversity value or open spaces that are important to rural and urban townscapes and landscapes any higher than 3* and may not maintain sites that are currently above 3* at their current level, as the focus is on improvement of low quality sites. • While this option improves open spaces it does not consider access in terms of reaching and entering the open space. This could result in some groups being excluded from using open spaces or could result in an increase in usage of cars to reach open spaces. • This option does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups.

Options Appraisal Summary

8.6   Table 8.1 above summaries the key positive and negative impacts of the options appraisal against the SA objectives that can be found in Appendix 10.

8.7   Of the 3 options, Option 2 has the highest score with +8, followed by Option 3 with +3. Option 1 score extremely negatively with -13. All 3 options had at least some negative and positive impacts.

8.8   The main positive impacts of the options include:
    • Reduced inequality in open space quality at a local level as well as at the Borough level (Option 2).
    • Reduced inequality in open space access at a local level as well as at the Borough level (Options 2 and 3).

- Biodiversity is not considered an important indicator of the quality of all types of open space so not all open spaces will have improved biodiversity value as a consequence of improved quality (Option 2).
- There is the potential for some open spaces that contribute to townscape/landscape setting to be lost (Option 2).
- Improved quality of open spaces with biodiversity value (Options 2 and 3).
- Improve quality of open spaces that are in Conservation Areas or contain listed buildings, village greens or SAM's (Options 2 and 3).
- Increased walking and cycling through utilisation of the public rights of way network and creation of new recreational routes to link open spaces to residential areas (Option 1).
- Equitable access to open spaces for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and horse riders (Option 1).
- Reduction in health inequalities through more equitable provision of open space that will allow better access to healthy recreation (Option 2 and 3).

8.9   The main negative impacts of the options include:
- Inequalities in open space quality for all open space types (Options 1 and 3).
- Inequalities in open space access for all open space types (Option 1).
- Lack of protection of some open space types that could result in loss of some open spaces (Option 1).
- Loss of some low value open spaces that could be higher value if better maintained or be of value at the neighbourhood level (Option 2).
- Degradation of the quality of open spaces with biodiversity value (Options 1 and 3).
- Degradation of the quality of open spaces within Conservation Areas and / or surrounding listed buildings (Options 1 and 3).
- Increased car use to travel to open spaces (Options 2 and 3).
- Does not actively encourage walking and cycling to open spaces (Options 2 and 3).
- Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups (All Options).

8.10 The options appraisal has shown that while the overarching principles in Option 2 have the most positive impact overall, all 3 options have positive components that should be considered in determining the most sustainable option for the OSS.

Cumulative Impact of the Strategic Options

8.11 In addition to other impacts described, the cumulative impacts of the strategic options should be considered. 'Cumulative impacts' is the term used to cover secondary, synergistic and cumulative impacts of the plan.

8.12 Cumulative impacts include loss of character, economic decline and climate change. These effects that are often more difficult to deal with at project EIA scale but can be easily dealt with at a more strategic level by SA.

8.13 Tables 8.2 to 8.4 outline the cumulative impacts for each option. The tables show that the majority of the cumulative impacts have been picked up as part of the options appraisal

against the SA objectives. It is important to remember that these impacts have a sphere of influence beyond the physical intervention area of the strategy.

8.14 Option 1 has the least cumulative impacts but all these impacts are negative. Option 2 has the most positive cumulative impacts, closely followed by Option 3, and has a similar number of negative impacts to Option 1 and Option 3.

Table 8.2 Cumulative Impacts of Option 1

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Impact	Cause
Landscape	Conservation Areas including • Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, • Stanhope road / Grange Road Conservation Area, • Northgate Conservation Area, • Haughton Village Conservation Area • Heighington Conservation Area and, • Middleton One Row Conservation Area	--	Poor quality open spaces in conservation areas having a negative impact on the landscape value on the conservation area.
Habitat degradation	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Great Crested Newt Habitat at: SNCIs • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Balancing Pond • Darchern Meadow • McMullen Road Wetland GCN habitat • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Black Path • Hundens Park Road	--	The open spaces these sites occupy are low quality and this option is likely to exacerbate this situation as no quality standards are set to improve sites.
Trips by car	Darlington	--	Improvement in the quality of strategic open spaces is likely to increase usage but there is not provision for improved public transport or cycling to strategic sites hence increased usage is more likely to be by people in cars.
Inequality in open space provision	East of Darlington: • Haughton North, • Lingfield, • Bank Top and • Lascelles. • Haughton West • Haughton East	--	This option does not set quality standards for open spaces so it is unlikely that areas with few high quality sites with have this issue addressed and inequalities will remain.

Table 8.3 Cumulative Impacts of Option 2

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Impact	Cause
Landscape degradation	All Conservation Areas	--/++	This option proposes to change open space usage to meet local needs in terms of types of open space. This change of use could have negative implications if an aesthetically pleasing site is change to a sports pitch but a positive impact if a bland site is changed to an attractive site such as a natural/semi natural site.
Trips by car	Darlington	--	Improvement in quality of strategic open spaces is likely to increase usage but there is no provision for improved public transport or cycling to strategic sites hence increased usage is more likely to be by people in cars.
Conservation area enhancement	All conservation areas	++	This option will focus on improving the quality of high value open spaces. Open spaces in conservation areas are considered high value thus it is likely the quality open spaces in conservation areas will be improved and thus improve their setting and landscape/townscape value.
Habitat enhancement	All open spaces with SNCIs and GCN habitat	++	This option will focus on improving the quality of high value open spaces. Open spaces with habitats or designated for their biodiversity value are considered high value thus it is likely the quality open spaces with habitats or designated for their biodiversity value will be improved and thus improve their setting and biodiversity value.
Inequality in open space quality	East of Darlington where there are fewer high quality open spaces: • Haughton North, • Lingfield, • Bank Top and • Lascelles. • Haughton West • Haughton East	++	This option focuses on creating more high quality open spaces. This will improve the quality of open spaces in the wards in the east of Darlington that currently have very few high quality open spaces.
Inequality in open space accessibility	Wards in Darlington that have deficiencies in some open space types that	+	This option sets accessibility standards that will address inequalities in access to most open spaces types, accepting the

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Impact	Cause
	effects accessibility to open space: • Cockerton West • Central • Lingfield • Eastbourne • Faverdale • Haughton East • Hammersknott • College • Park West		limitations of space in the most densely built up areas of the urban area..
Health inequalities	Wards in Darlington that have open space deficiencies and have poor health IMD, especially the 11 priority wards: • Central • Cockerton West • Bank Top • Eastbourne • Lascelles • Park East • Northgate • Haughton East • North Road • Lingfield • Cockerton East	+	This option sets access and quality standards for open space provision that will address inequalities access to quality recreation space, This will contribute to addressing health inequalities by providing more attractive opportunities nearby for active recreation, a key element of a healthy lifestyle.
Loss of potentially valuable open spaces	Potentially all open spaces classed as low value.	-	Some low value open spaces will be disposed of. Open spaces perceived as low value at the neighbourhood level that could be considered as valuable and if they were maintained at a higher quality they could be perceived as higher value.

Table 8.4 Cumulative Impacts of Option 3

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Impact	Cause
Landscape	All conservation areas except Victoria Embankment Conservation Area.	--	This option focuses on improving poor quality open spaces to 3* rather than maintaining and enhancing sites at 4* and 5* quality. Therefore it is unlikely that high quality open spaces in conservation areas will be maintained at a high quality.
Habitat degradation	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Great Crested Newt Habitat at: SNCIs - Drinkfield Marsh - Darchern Meadows - West Cemetery	--	This option focuses on improving poor quality open spaces to 3* rather than maintaining and enhancing sites at 4* and 5* quality. Therefore it is unlikely that high quality open spaces that contain designated SNCI will be maintained at a high quality.
Trips by car	Darlington	--	Improvement in quality of strategic open spaces is likely to increase usage but there is not provision for improved public transport or cycling to strategic sites hence increased usage is more likely to be by people in cars.
Inequality in open space quality	East of Darlington where there are fewer high quality open spaces: - Haughton North, - Lingfield, - Bank Top and - Lascelles. - Haughton West - Haughton East	--	This option focuses on bringing low quality sites to a good quality hence it will not address the inequality in high quality sites in Darlington that manifest in the east of Darlington.
Landscape enhancement	Conservation Areas including: - Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, - Stanhope road / Grange Road Conservation Area, - Northgate Conservation Area, - Haughton Village Conservation Area , - Heighington Conservation Area . and - Middleton One Row Conservation Area	++	This option will focus on improving the quality of open spaces that are of low quality. This may reduce or eliminate poor quality open spaces in conservation areas and improve their setting and landscape/townscape value.
Habitat	Sites of Nature Conservation	++	This option will focus on improving the

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Impact	Cause
enhancement	Interest and Great Crested Newt Habitat at: SNCIs: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Balancing Pond • Darchern Meadow • McMullen Road Wetland GCN habitat: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Black Path • Hundens Park Road		quality of open spaces that are of low quality. This may reduce or eliminate poor quality open spaces with valuable habitats or designated for their biodiversity value and hence improve their setting and biodiversity value.
Inequality in open space accessibility	Wards in Darlington that have deficiencies in some open space types that effects accessibility: • Cockerton West • Central • Lingfield • Eastbourne • Faverdale • Haughton East • Hammersknott • College • Park West	++	This option sets high accessibility standards that will address inequalities in access to all open spaces types.

9   EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF THE PLAN (Task B4)

Background

9.1   In this section the impacts of each option are evaluated to determine the most sustainable option for the OSS. This is achieved through determining the impact significance.

9.2   Impact significance considers:
- Long term / short term impacts
- Likelihood of the impact
- Scale / location of the impact
- If the impact will be temporary or permanent

9.3   Once the impacts have been evaluated we can consider which option is the most sustainable in terms of their significant negative and positive impacts. Once this has been determined we can begin to consider if the negative impacts of the most sustainable option can be mitigated and how its positive impacts should be secured.

Impact Significance

9.4   Tables 9.1 to 9.3 appraise the significance of the main impacts of each option. Option 1 has several significant negative impacts. They include inequalities in open space provision and access, poor quality open spaces within conservation areas and containing listed buildings, loss of some types of open space and a lack of encouragement of community cohesion. These impacts are all permanent, long term, either high or medium likelihood and affect a substantial area. This option, however, does have a significant positive impact that the other options do not have in that it promotes cycling and walking to open spaces and promotes equitable access to open spaces for people walking, horse riding, cycling and for people with disabilities.

9.5   Option 2 has the several significant positive impacts as this option addresses inequalities in open space access and quality, improving the quality of open spaces with biodiversity and landscape/townscape value. Significant negative impacts of this option include the increase in trips by car, the lack of equitable access and failure to encourage community cohesion. These impacts are all significant as they are all permanent, either medium or long term, either high or medium likelihood and affect a substantial area. There is one negative impact with low significance, this is the loss of open spaces that are low value that could be valuable but are excluded from the criteria that would make them Locally Important Open Spaces. This has low significance as it is very uncertain and unlikely to affect many open spaces.

9.6   Table 9.3 shows that all of the impacts of Option 3 are significant impacts, including both positive and negative impacts. This option has the same significant positive impacts as Option 2 but has more significant negative impacts. This option will not address inequalities in the distribution of high quality open spaces and will not maximise the quality of important open spaces in Conservation Areas or containing listed buildings, village greens,

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and sites of biodiversity value. Other, important significant negative impacts of this option include increase in trips by car, the lack of equitable access and failure to encourage community cohesion, as in Option 2.

9.7   Of the 3 options, Option 2 – the proposed approach for the OSS has the most positive and least negative significant impacts and overall is the most sustainable approach. This option has some significant negative impacts, however, that need to be mitigated to ensure this option is delivered in the most sustainable manner.

Table 9.1 Impact significance of Option 1

Impact	Applicable SA Objectives	Appraisal Score	Permanent / Temporary	Likelihood	Scale / Location	Timing
Increased walking and cycling through utilisation of the public rights of way network and creation of new recreational routes to link open spaces to residential areas	SAO 3, SAO 4	++	Permanent	Medium	Urban area of Darlington and 3 largest villages	Long term
Equitable access to open spaces for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and horse riders	SAO 3, SAO 4	++	Permanent	Medium	Ward level	Long term
Inequality in open space quality for all open space types	SAO 1, SAO 2. SAO 3, SAO 6	--	Permanent	High	Haughton North, Lingfield, Bank Top Lascelles, Haughton West and Haughton East	Long term
Inequality in open space access for all open space types	SAO 2. SAO 3, SAO 6	--	Permanent	High	Cockerton West, Central, Lingfield, Eastbourne, Faverdale, Haughton East, Hammersknott, College and Park West.	Long term
Lack of protection of some open space types that could result in loss of some open spaces	SAO 2, SAO 3, SAO 5, SAO 6, SAO 7	--	Permanent	Medium	Open spaces in the villages, allotments, green corridors, landscape sites and civic spaces.	Long term
Open spaces with biodiversity value (SNCIs and/or Great Crested Newt habitat) in poor quality	SAO 5	--	Permanent	High	SNCIs: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Balancing Tank • Darchern Meadow • McMullen Road Wetland GCN habitat: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Black Path • Hundens Park Road	Medium term
Open spaces in conservation areas or contain listed buildings in poor quality	SAO 6	--	Permanent	High	• Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, • Stanhope road / Grange Road Conservation Area, • Northgate Conservation Area, • Haughton Village Conservation Area and , • Heighington Conservation Area and , • Middleton One Row Conservation Area	Medium term

Impact	Applicable SA Objectives	Appraisal Score	Permanent / Temporary	Likelihood	Scale / Location	Timing
Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups	SAO 3	--	Permanent	Medium	Ward level	Medium term

Table 9.2 Impact significance of Option 2

Impact	Applicable SA Objectives	Appraisal Score	Permanent / Temporary	Likelihood	Scale / Location	Timing
Reduced inequalities in open space quality at a local level as well as at the Borough level	SAO 1, SAO 2. SAO 3, SAO 6	++	Permanent	High	All wards in Darlington Borough.	Long term
Reduced inequalities in open space access at a local level as well as at the Borough level	SAO 2. SAO 3, SAO 6	++	Permanent	High	All wards in Darlington	Long term
Improved quality of open spaces with biodiversity value	SAO 5	++	Permanent	Medium	Open spaces with Great Crested Newt habitat or designated Site of Nature Conservation Interest	Medium term
Improved quality of open spaces that are in Conservation Areas or contain listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Village Greens	SAO 6	++	Permanent	Medium	All open spaces within Conservation Areas or open spaces containing or adjacent to listed buildings, village greens or SAMs	Medium term
Increased car use due to a lack links between public transport, homes and open spaces and a lack or pedestrian and cycle routes to open spaces	SAO 4	--	Permanent	High	Darlington	Medium term
Does not improve access into open spaces from residential areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists	SAO 2, SAO 4	--	Permanent	Medium	Ward level	Medium term
Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups	SAO 3	--	Permanent	Medium	Ward level	Medium term
Disposal of open spaces with low value that could be of higher value if better maintained or hold importance at the neighbourhood level.	SAO 3, SAO 5, SAO 7	--	Permanent	Low	All low value open spaces in Darlington	Medium term

Table 9.3 Impact significance of Option 3

Impact	Applicable SA Objectives	Appraisal Score	Permanent / Temporary	Likelihood	Scale / Location	Timing
Reduced inequalities in open space access at a local level as well as at the Borough level	SAO 2, SAO 3, SAO 4, SAO 6	++	Permanent	Medium	Ward level across Darlington Borough.	Long term
Improved quality of open spaces with biodiversity value	SAO 5	++	Permanent	Medium	SNCIs: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Balancing Tank • Darchern Meadow • McMullen Road Wetland GCN habitat: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Black Path • Hundens Park Road	Medium term
Improved quality of open spaces that are in Conservation Areas or contain listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Village Greens	SAO 6	++	Permanent	Medium	Conservation Areas including • Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, • Stanhope road / Grange Road Conservation Area, • Northgate Conservation Area, • Haughton Village Conservation Area • Heighington Conservation Area and . • Middleton One Row Conservation Area	Medium term
Inequality in open space quality for all open space types	SAO 1, SAO 2. SAO 3, SAO 6	--	Permanent	High	Haughton North, Lingfield, Bank Top Lascelles, Haughton West and Haughton East	Long term
Poor quality open spaces containing SNCIs and/or Great Crested Newt habitat.	SAO 5	--	Permanent	High	SNCIs: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Balancing Tank • Darchern Meadow • McMullen Road Wetland GCN habitat: • Horsefield Pond • Faverdale Black Path • Hundens Park Road	Medium term
Limited quality of open spaces in conservation areas or containing listed buildings	SAO 6	--	Permanent	High	Conservation areas, listed buildings, village greens and SAMs of 4* and 5* quality.	Medium term

Impact	Applicable SA Objectives	Appraisal Score	Permanent / Temporary	Likelihood	Scale / Location	Timing
Increased car use due to a lack links between public transport, homes and open spaces and a lack or pedestrian and cycle routes to open spaces	SAO 4	--	Permanent	High	Darlington	Medium term
Does not improve access into open spaces from residential areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists	SAO 2, SAO 4	--	Permanent	Medium	Ward level, across Darlington	Medium term
Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups	SAO 3	--	Permanent	High	Ward level, across Darlington	Medium term

Mitigation (Task B5)

9.8   Table 9.4 shows the negative impacts of the proposed OSS, Option 2 and outlines whether the impact can be reasonably mitigated. It shows that all of the negative impacts of this option can be mitigated. This mitigation should be incorporated into the final version of the OSS if the preferred option is taken forward to adoption, to ensure the final OSS is as sustainable as possible.

Table 9.4 Negative impacts of Option 2 and proposed mitigation

Impact	Mitigation	Possible to mitigate?
Increased car use due to a lack of links between public transport, homes and open spaces and a lack or pedestrian and cycle routes to open spaces	Include polices that will promote use of public transport, cycling and walking to open spaces rather than by car, taking account of the important role of the Local Transport Plan and the Development Plan in achieving this.	Yes
Does not improve access into open spaces from residential areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists	Include policies for the incorporation of access considerations for people with disabilities or small children for some types of open space, for the open space types it would be appropriate to do so.	Yes
Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all community groups	Include polices in the OSS that will encourage community events at open spaces, and promotes activities to give the local community ownership of and involvement in planning the management and maintenance of open spaces.	Yes
Disposes of open spaces with low value, but some low value open spaces could be of higher value if better maintained or hold importance at the neighbourhood level.	Careful investigation is required to determine if low value sites should be disposed of by undertaking a site by site analysis of each open space, considering all these issues.	Yes
Loss of some open spaces with biodiversity value	The disposal of sites should exclude any sites with identified biodiversity value and all sites of biodiversity value should be enhanced to at least 3* quality.	Yes
Loss of some sites within Conservation Areas and surrounding listed buildings	Ensure open spaces with listed buildings, conservation areas, SAMs and village greens are not disposed of due to low quality and they are improved to be within the 70% of sites that are to be 3* or 25% of open spaces that are to be 4* or 5* under this option.	Yes

9.9   The OSS does not propose policies to improve community involvement in open spaces, improve access into open spaces for disabled people and adults with small children, or improve access to open spaces by public transport. The mitigation in Table 9.4 aims to address these issues through better involvement of local people in planning, managing, maintaining and enjoying open spaces. This should be incorporated into the proposed approach for the final OSS.

9.10 Another issue that requires further consideration is the disposal of low value open spaces. Some low value open spaces can be important at the neighbourhood level or be important for local landscapes and townscapes or have some biodiversity value as poor quality sites are often derelict and undisturbed thus aiding habitat development. Furthermore an open space with low value could be of higher value if it was brought to a higher quality. Careful investigation is required to determine if low value sites should be disposed of by undertaking a site by site analysis of each open space, considering all the above issues.

Securing Positive Impacts (Task B5)

9.11 It is important that positive impacts of the preferred option, in this case Option 2, are secured. The main positive impacts of the Option 2 can be seen in Table 10.2 with recommendations as to how these positive impacts should be secured by the OSS.

Table 9.5 Positive impacts of Option 2 and recommendations as to securing them as part of the OSS

Positive Impact	Recommendations
Reduced inequality and open space quality at a local level as well as at the Borough level	Ensure that open space quality is improved in the east of Darlington as a priority, where there are fewer high quality open spaces. Including: • Haughton North, • Lingfield, • Bank Top and • Lascelles. • Haughton West • Haughton East
Reduced inequality in open space access at a local level as well as at the Borough level	Ensure that open space access improvements are prioritised for the wards in Darlington that have deficiencies in some open space types that effects accessibility, including: • Cockerton West • Central • Lingfield • Eastbourne • Faverdale • Haughton East • Hammersknott • College • Park West
Improved quality of open spaces with biodiversity value	While improving the quality of open spaces will contribute to the improvement of open spaces that are already recognised for their biodiversity value, more explicit policies should be built into the OSS to improve and maintain the biodiversity value of open spaces. Therefore to ensure all open spaces have biodiversity value as a secondary function.

Positive Impact	Recommendations
Improved quality of open spaces that are in Conservation Areas or contain listed buildings, Village Greens or SAM's	While improving the quality of open spaces will contribute to the improvement of open spaces that are already recognised for their townscape/landscape value, more explicit policies should be built into the OSS to improve and maintain the landscape value of all open spaces to ensure all open spaces have optimal landscape value. Furthermore open spaces with landscape/townscape value should be included in the locally important open spaces policy which will improve the quality of all locally important open spaces.
Reduced health inequalities as there is better access to high quality open space, which in turn encourages active recreation, a key element of healthy lifestyles.	While improved open space quality and access creates a better infrastructure to promote healthy recreation, the OSS should have a more active role in reducing health inequalities. The implementation of the OSS should be tied closely with events and programmes that aim to improve the health of the community through sport and recreation.

10   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

10.1   In this section of the report the main conclusions of the SA are summarised and the report recommendations as a consequence of the SA are outlined for the delivery of a sustainable OSS.

Conclusions and Recommendations

10.2   This Sustainability Appraisal appraised the sustainability of 3 options for Darlington's Open Spaces Strategy. The options vary in their level of intervention and approach to the management of open spaces within Darlington Borough.

10.3   The 3 options were developed by Darlington Borough Council and reviewed by the OSS SA forum to ensure all reasonable options were considered for the OSS.

10.4   The appraisal was undertaken by BDP Planning and reviewed by the OSS SA forum. The appraisal found Option 2, the proposed approach for the OSS, to be the most sustainable option.

10.5   The appraisal has, however, revealed that Option 2 could result in some significant negative impacts. These negative impacts can be mitigated, as described in Section 9 of this report. Inclusion of this mitigation in the OSS is a strong recommendation of the SA of the OSS options and will contribute to sustainable delivery of the OSS. It is especially important to include a robust policy with detailed criteria for the disposal of poor quality open spaces to ensure that valuable open spaces are not lost as a consequence of the OSS. Mitigation recommended includes:

- The delivery of the OSS should complement the delivery of other programmes and strategies to improve health through healthy recreation and sport.
- Delivery of the OSS should complement implementation of the Local Transport Plan, which promotes the use of public transport, walking and cycling to reach open spaces.
- The OSS should include policies to ensure access into open spaces for people with children or disabled people, where this would be appropriate.
- Reassessment of low value sites before they are disposed of, considering their value in terms of neighbourhood uses, landscape value or biodiversity value.

10.6   The proposed approach also has a series of significant positive impacts that must be secured if the OSS is to be sustainable. Table 9.5 outlines a series of recommendations that should be included in the OSS to ensure these predicted positive impacts are delivered.

10.7   In Section 3 of this report the scope of the OSS is provided. This helps to define the scope of the OSS in terms of what it can reasonably deliver in terms of its contribution in encouraging a sustainable future for Darlington. However, the OSS is just one of many plans and strategies that the Council has adopted. Many issues such as encouraging

sustainable transport and dealing with inequalities, promoting biodiversity and cultural heritage that are important to the OSS can be addressed thorough complementary measures in these other plans and strategies, e.g. through policies in the Local Development Framework or the Local Transport Plan, or the health improvement strategies of partner agencies like the Primary Care Trust.

10.8   With this in mind, this SA recommends that the OSS should have a supporting role in the implementation of related Development Plan Documents and other plans and strategies to bring about sustainability in a holistic manner.

10.9   This appraisal concludes that if Option 2, the proposed approach, is delivered incorporating the recommendations for mitigation and securing positive impacts included in this report, it will be the most sustainable option for the delivery of Darlington's OSS.

10.10 In the remaining sections of this report, a draft monitoring framework is presented and the next steps are outlined for the completion of the SA process. These sections will be completed after the consultation of the OSS and the SA of the OSS.

11   MONITORING FRAMEWORK (Task B6)

11.1   The SA framework in Appendix 7 provides a base from which a monitoring system can be developed. The indicators for each SA objective should be monitored and compared to the baseline situation to determine if the plan has had a positive or negative impact on the baseline. The impact should also be considered alongside the targets for each indicator and the baseline situation at other locations or more strategically (regionally or nationally) if this is appropriate.

11.2   It is also important to consider the predicted impact of the options to determine if the predicted impact during the SA process initially was correct. Once this has been determined further investigation can take place to rectify any adverse impacts and to further enhance positive impacts.

11.3   Both qualitative and quantitative analysis should be used in determining the performance of key indicators to enhance the understanding of the situation. It is important that clear causal links are made between the indicators and the plan, as indicators can be influenced by a variety factors.

11.4   It is not necessary that all the indicators in the SA framework are included in the monitoring framework, but rather key indicators that will monitor the predicted impacts of the OSS, both positive and negatives and monitor the implantation and success of the mitigation measures incorporated in the OSS.

11.5   Darlington Borough Council need to consider all the indicators in the SA framework and draw a selection of indicators for each objective that will form the monitoring framework. The indicators selected should be readily monitored by the Council or another body to ensure an effective monitoring framework is built. The framework should include:

- Indicator to be monitored for each objective;

- Baseline situation/trend;

- Targets and thresholds to trigger remedial action;

- Who will monitor it;

- When it will be monitored;

- Links to other monitoring frameworks of other plans;

- Organisational arrangements to ensure monitoring will be ongoing; and,

- Reporting system that feeds back into the plan.

11.6   An Action Plan for the delivery of the OSS has been developed. The Action Plan is structured around the four OSS objectives, with several actions for each objective. Each

action has a milestone or target to meet; these targets should be built into the monitoring framework, along with targets derived by this SA, and used to monitor the OSS.

11.7 Table 11.1 contains a draft SA monitoring framework for the OSS. This needs to be completed by Darlington Borough Council to ensure the SA monitoring framework that is developed will be feasible in terms ensuring the resources available to meet data collection requirements for each indicator and to allocate departments / individuals to collect the data. At this stage, the monitoring framework does not have to be finalised (the final monitoring framework is produced as part of Stage E of the SA guidance) but it should still be well informed.

Table 11.1 Draft SA Monitoring Framework for Darlington's OSS

SA Objective	Indicator	Data Source (to be completed by DBC)	Collection period / date and person (to be completed by DBC)
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1. To promote community safety	% of open spaces covered by CCTV	Darlington Community Safety Partnership.	Annually. DBC (Rob Jones)
	Number of complaints over vandalism in open spaces.	Community Services Customer Helpline.	Annually. DBC (Fiona Carroll ??)
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 2. To encourage a healthy lifestyle with good accessibility to sport, play and recreation and reduce inequalities in health	Number of events associated with healthy lifestyles held in the Borough's open spaces.	Council events diary ?	Annually. PCT ?, DBC Leisure, DBC Countryside, DBC Community Partnerships.
	% population satisfaction: • with parks and open space • with children's play areas	Community Survey	Annually. DBC Policy Unit.
	% dwellings within 300m of a 0.1ha open space	GIS/Accession.	Every three years. DBC Transport Policy.
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 3. To promote strong and inclusive communities	Accessibility of open space for the following types: • Parks and Gardens • Equipped play areas • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space • Outdoor sports facilities • Allotments	GIS/Accession.	Every three years. DBC Transport Policy.

SA Objective	Indicator	Data Source (to be completed by DBC)	Collection period / date and person (to be completed by DBC)
	Quality of open space for the following types: • Parks and Gardens • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space • Green corridors • Landscape Amenity • Cemeteries • Civic spaces	Resurvey.	A third of all sites each year on a rolling programme. DBC Planning Policy/Urban Design.
	Quantity of open space for the following types (per 1000 population) • Parks and Gardens • Equipped play areas • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space	DBC Open Spaces Database.	Annually. DBC Planning Policy.
	% of people who live in wards where the quantity of open space is less than half of the proposed standard and the proportion of sites meeting each quality standard are more than 15% below those set out in Policy 6.	DBC Open Spaces Database and resurvey results.	Every three years. DBC Planning Policy.
	% of open spaces accessible to disabled people.	Survey.	Every three years. DBC Planning Policy/ Urban Design in partnership with DAD ?
	Number of events in open spaces	Record of events.	Annually Community Services (Leisure, Community Partnerships), Groundwork, and Countryside Team.
	Number of Friends Groups and members of Friend Groups for open spaces / parks	DBC records.	Annually. DBC Community Services (Streetscene Team Leaders ?)
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 4. To promote an increase in trips by walking, cycling and public transport	Number of strategic open spaces served by public transport.		Annually. DBC Transport Policy.
	Number of open spaces whose entrance lies on a cycle route.	GIS/DBC records.	Annually. DBC Transport Policy.

SA Objective	Indicator	Data Source (to be completed by DBC)	Collection period / date and person (to be completed by DBC)
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 5. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	Number of opens spaces with primary purpose natural/semi-natural greenspace that achieve each quality rating from 1* to 5*.	Open Spaces Database / Resurvey	Every three years. DBC Planning Policy in partnership with Countryside Team.
	Number of open spaces with SNCIs that achieve each quality rating from 1* to 5*.	Open Spaces Database / Resurvey	Every three years. DBC Planning Policy in partnership with Countryside Team.
	Number of SNCIs in open spaces	Open Spaces Database	DBC Countryside Team
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 6. To promote access to the quality countryside and open spaces	Population living within 300m of an open space of 2ha or more of natural/semi-natural green space.	GIS/Accession	DBC Countryside Team/Transport Policy Team
	% residents satisfied with access to green space.	Community Survey	Annually. DBC Policy Unit.
	Proportion of designated play areas meeting minimum European standards	Survey data.	Annually ? DBC Community Services
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 7. To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings	Number of open spaces with or adjacent to listed buildings, a scheduled ancient monument or a registered park or garden that achieve each quality rating from 1* to 5*	Open Spaces Database	Annually. DBC Planning Policy
	Number of opens spaces that are within conservation areas or are village greens that achieve each 4* or 5* quality rating.	Open Spaces Database	Every three years. DBC Planning Policy
	Registered Historic Parks and Gardens • Number • Area % at risk		

12 NEXT STEPS

Introduction

12.1 In order to complete the Sustainability Appraisal process, Stage D, consultation on the SA report and the preferred open spaces strategy, and Stage E, monitoring and implementation of the open spaces strategy, have to be completed. The tasks required for each stage are included in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 Tasks to be completed for Stage D and Stage E of Sustainability Appraisal Process

Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the OSS and SA Report
D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the draft Open Spaces Strategy and the SA Report.
D2 (i): Appraising significant changes.
D2 (ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations.
D3: Making decisions and providing information.
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Open Spaces Strategy
E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring.
E2: Responding to adverse effects.

Consultation, Appraising Changes to the Plan and Monitoring

12.2 The Sustainability Appraisal of Darlington's OSS will be consulted on alongside the consultation for the OSS itself.

12.3 After consultation a revised SA report will be completed that will include:

- Details of the OSS consultation on the preferred option and SA report, and the outcomes of the process;

- It will outline significant changes made to the OSS as a consequence of consultation and it will appraise these changes using the SA process;

- Details of how the monitoring framework will be implemented in terms of when, where and who will monitor each indicator; and,

- Details of how adverse impacts of the plan have been dealt with once the plan has been implemented.

Subsequent Assessment

12.4   This Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken for Darlington's OSS. The OSS includes the development of policies for the restructuring of Darlington's open spaces to ensure higher quality open spaces that are more equitably distributed. This Sustainability Appraisal has been completed considering this scope.

12.5   To take the OSS forward, an Action Plan has been prepared and will be consulted on alongside the draft OSS This Action Plan may require scrutiny under Sustainability Appraisal to ensure the OSS is being delivered sustainably.

Appendix 1

Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal of Darlington's Open Spaces Strategy

Appendix 2

Statutory Consultees' Responses to the Scoping Report

Northumbria Team

Serving Northumberland, Durham, Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley

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Valerie Adams
Planning Officer
Development & Environment Department
Darlington BC
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

valerie.adams@darlington.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: NB6b.

Date: 2006

Direct Dial: 01661 845508
email: jenny.loring@english-nature.org.uk

English Nature and parts of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency are being brought together to form Natural England on 1 October 2006. Natural England's role will be to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the well-being and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

In preparation for Natural England, English Nature Northumbria Team will be moving offices on 31 July 2006.
Our new contact details will be as follows:

Address: The Quadrant, Newburn Riverside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NZ.
Tel: 0191 2295500; Fax: 0191 2295508.
My Direct Dial: 0191 229 3324

Dear Ms Adams,

Request for advice/information under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the `Strategic Environmental Assessment` Directive)
Darlington Open Space Strategy

Thank you for consulting English Nature on the above plan, with regard to the scoping report.

This letter is provided as the formal response of English Nature to your request for advice or information under Directive 2001/42/EC (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) for this plan or programme.

English Nature consider LDFs in the context of **PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation**; thus we look to see appropriate consideration of designated sites, protected species, ancient woodland, habitats of principal importance and habitat networks, including cumulative effects. This

working today for nature tomorrow

should encompass protection of existing features, identify opportunities to maintain, create and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity resources and the encouragement of access to suitable sites and areas. PPS9 Policies 4-16 specifically address issues to be addressed in LDFs. The entire LDF process should be reviewed and the assessment carried out in the context of these National Planning Policies which set out a spectrum of issues to be addressed in spatial planning at the local level.

PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation published by ODPM 16 August is available at
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1143833 ,
the accompanying Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system (ODPM 06/2005, Defra 01/2005)
http://www.planninghelp.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/51E3F3F7-6F17-4E26-A570-87908B964400/0/062005.pdf ,
and the accompanying ODPM guide Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice (March 2006) http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1164839

Good practice summary for addressing biodiversity and geological conservation through the Local Development Framework (from ODPM - Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice).

- Applying a spatial planning approach whereby the LDF seeks to deliver the objectives of broader biodiversity/geodiversity strategies and to ensure these are integrated in all land use and development sectors.
- Setting a basis for development control which seeks to promote positive benefits to biodiversity and geological conservation.
- Ensuring that the various local development documents within the LDF provide the scope necessary to achieve the above objectives.
- Securing a strong evidence base on biodiversity and geological conservation to satisfy the requirements of sustainability appraisal and the tests of soundness.
- Fully engaging all stakeholders in the process of preparing the LDF and frontloading their involvement.
- Setting ambitious but achievable targets to monitor progress in securing objectives for biodiversity and geological conservation.

Scoping Report

We have considered the information provided by you at the **scoping stage** of the SEA assessment process in order to give particular attention to the likely effects of the plan or programme on **biodiversity, geodiversity, flora** and **fauna** and to consider the likely effects on **soil, water** and landscape in so far as these are necessary to support biodiversity, flora and fauna.

In order to assess the plan in the context of Biodiversity, geodiversity and other nature conservation interests, we would look to see an evaluation of likely impacts (direct or indirect) on designated sites, protected species, wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation and related drainage, including cumulative effects. This should encompass protection of existing features and identify opportunities to create and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity resources inline with local targets.

Comments

We would look to see the Open Spaces Strategy establish a strategic base to deliver biodiversity benefit throughout the borough recognising and encouraging opportunities for management for nature conservation as a use in its own right and to encourage this as a key facet of the multi-use of all spaces.

This Strategy should also lead the way in establishing a strategic assessment of the nature conservation assets of the district including and audit of the occurrence of protected species and their habitat as part of the baseline information. Darlington is particularly significant as a key area in the north east for the occurrence of Great Crested Newt, a European protected species but there is not a full audit of distribution.

The Strategy also provides a strategic opportunity to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan Targets within the Borough

The Strategic Environmental Assessment aspect of the SA should ensure that these aspects, key to delivering government Policy as set out in PPS9, are integrated into the Strategy.

Table 6.2 Baseline data and targets For SA objective 5 Would be much more useful to monitor area of Priority Habitat, the area for Darlington is set out in the Biodiversity Audit for the North East. The increase in area can then be monitored and will contribute to the delivery of BAPs.
Also the area of Habitat under management is more valuable than the number of programmes.
It would also be valuable to measure integration of nature conservation interests into all open space provision, recognising the value of mixed uses for green space. This will illustrate Darlingtons contribution to delivering government policy for restoration or creation of new priority habitats and conserve other habitats.

Provision of Information

We have considered your request for information/data on relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (the "baseline environment") in the plan area for use in preparing the SEA Environmental Report. We have given particular attention to the likely effects of the plan or programme on **biodiversity, geodiversity, flora** and **fauna**. We have also considered the likely effects on soil, water and landscape in so far as these are necessary to support biodiversity, flora and fauna.

Key information sources on Biodiversity interests and other Environmental Issues in the North East are:
- 'A Biodiversity Audit of the North East' prepared by Nick Brodin for the North East Biodiversity Forum (2001). Available from this office or through our website
- 'Biodiversity Indicators and Targets for the North East of England' prepared by Margaret Street and Nick Brodin for the North East Biodiversity Forum (2004)
- 'State of the Environment Report for the North East of England', commissioned by ONE North East working with regional Partners including members of the North East Environment Forum and Biodiversity Forum (2004) is available through ONE North East's Website at www.onenortheast.co.uk/page/regionalinit/crosscut/environ.cfm

- Information on the designated nature conservation sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the International sites: Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites can be obtained from the **English Nature website** www.english-nature.org.uk. This allows access to interactive maps of designated sites and includes condition assessment information related to SSSI as well as overlays for Biodiversity Action Plan Broad Habitats and geological sites.

- The National Audit Office also holds summary information by Authority for monitoring purposes on environmental as other issues, this can be accessed at http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/(njii2ceu0t0g1k45nrszhomz)/StaticPage.aspx?info=25&menu=5

- Another key source is **Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside** (MAGIC), www.magic.gov.uk (ward level GIS data) - a large and growing source of environmental GIS datasets which can be selected and combined online.
- The **Biodiversity Activity Recording System** (BARS) is now available on line at www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk, this provides greater detail for the development of biodiversity indicators across the North East.
- Through the **NBN Gateway** www.searchnbn.net, you can quickly find biodiversity information that is available within the National Biodiversity Network. This is much more than a search engine and also allows you to access raw biodiversity data.

- Please contact us if the Local Plan includes specific locations, geological or biodiversity issues where the SEA process should consider information beyond that identified above.

- It is particularly relevant at this point to consider the long overdue need for a Regional Environmental Information Centre in the North East. This is currently being promoted by the North East Biodiversity Forum, a subgroup of the Regional Environment Forum working to the Regional Assembly. The development of this centre is critical for the collation and provision of data:

    o to provide relevant baseline for environmental aspects of SEA
    o for monitoring indicators and targets in all the Development Frameworks
    o as an information resource for prospective developers evaluating the environmental aspects of sites and properties.

    It is critically important that all North East planning authorities recognise the value of this resource and support its development. Any enquiry or support should be forwarded to the The **Regional Biodiversity Forum**; c/o Nick Brodin (Biodiversity Forum Secretariat) or Andrew Smith, both at Government Office North East, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4WH.

Baseline data and indicators

There are a number of practical indicators we would recommend for nature conservation issues. These are based on those set out in the Integrated Regional Framework, adjusted to reflect the issues which English Nature is most frequently consulted on by Local Planning Authorities:

- **SSSI and international Site condition**:
  - Numbers of Planning applications conditioned to ensure works to manage/ enhance condition of SSSI/ N2K/ Ramsar features of interest (LPA maintain log).
  - Area of SSSI in adverse condition as a result of development (available from English Nature web site). In relation to the PSA target the conditions are simplified into 2 categories: Favourable ('Favourable' and 'Unfavourable recovering') and 'Adverse' (the remaining unfavourable and destroyed categories)
- **Protected species** - subject of a large amount of EN casework from new development, conversions and small scale property extensions.
  - PPS9 addresses protected species in paragraphs 1(ii) 15 & 16 with the Part IV of the Government Circular setting out consideration due to species in considering development proposals.
  - Quantified data might include numbers of applications where protected species are considered, numbers with conditions imposed to ensure working practices and works to protect/ enhance protected species, and numbers of PAs which result in need for protected species licence in order to be carried out (could also consider where licensed workers are used to carry out initial survey work). This will indicate that protected species are being given appropriate consideration within the planning system and begin to build up information on their occurrence within the Plan Area.
- **BAP habitat** created/ managed as result of grant PA (LPA Monitor area through Conditions, obligations agreements etc).
- English Nature also recommend indicators and targets in relation to Access to Natural Greenspace in line with the following standards:

  - that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
  - provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
  - that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
  - that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
  - that there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

To understand the general background to this advice, and in order that any later or alternative versions of the plan or programme take adequate account of biodiversity, geodiversity, flora and fauna, we recommend that you consult "*Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity: Guidance for Practitioners*" which can be downloaded from our website at http://www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/SEAbiodiversityGuide.pdf and which is also available on CD-Rom by telephone or written request to this office.

This opinion is based on the information provided by you, and for the avoidance of doubt does not affect our obligation to advise on, and potentially object to any specific development proposal which may subsequently arise from this or later versions of the plan or programme which is the subject of this consultation, and which may despite SEA have adverse effects on the environment.

I trust that this is helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address or telephone number should you wish to discuss this matter further.

We look forward to working with you further on the development of the # Local Development Framework; please mark further consultations for my attention.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Loring
Conservation Officer
Designations and Development Plans

Enc: Annex I

Annex I

Basis for English Nature advice provided at the SEA scoping stage

Generic advice on each aspect of the scope of the SEA is set out in this Annex, which is structured to reflect the expected contents of the Environmental Report as given in the SEA Regulations Schedule 2.

Specific section of the Environmental report (based on the draft SEA Regulations Sch. 2)	Advice of English Nature

1. Relationship (if any) with other relevant plans and programmes.	The following should be considered to provide the context for evaluation of Biodiversity and Geodiversity issues in the North East
	
	• *PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*, its accompanying *Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system* and the forthcoming good practice guide.
	• *Working with the Grain of Nature :A Biodiversity Strategy for England* (DEFRA 2002)
	• *UK BAP* (DEFAR 1994)
	• Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East
	• Integrated Regional Framework for the North East
	• A Biodiversity Audit of the North East
	• State of the Environment Report for the North East of England
	• The relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
	• AONB Management where relevant
	For Coastal Districts relevant
	    • Shoreline Management Plan: St Abb's Head to the River Tyne or River Tyne to Flamborough Head
	    • European Marine Site Management Scheme where applicable

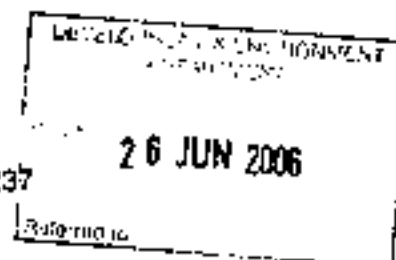| Specific section of the Environmental report (based on the draft SEA Regulations Sch. 2)	Advice of English Nature
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without implementation of the plan or programme.	Key information in the North East which should form the basis of this assessment is available in: • 'State of the Environment Report for the North East of England', commissioned by ONE North East working with regional Partners including members of the North East Environment Forum and Biodiversity Forum (2004) is available through ONE North East's Website at www.onenortheast.co.uk/page/regionalinit/crosscut/environ.cfm • 'A Biodiversity Audit of the North East' prepared by Nick Brodin for the North East Biodiversity Forum (2001). Available from this office or through our website • 'Biodiversity Indicators and Targets for the North East of England' prepared by Margaret Street and Nick Brodin for the North East Biodiversity Forum (2004) • 'Natural Commitment: Working together for wildlife in the North East', EN & GONE (2003) • These sources should be supplemented by the relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plans. • Information on international and national environmental designations is available on www.magic.gov.uk. • Nature on the Map www.natureonthemap.org.uk presents current information on the state of designated nature conservation sites
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	These should be identified from the sources above, along with Natural Area and Countryside Character Area profiles both accessible through www.magic.gov.uk.

Specific section of the Environmental report (based on the draft SEA Regulations Sch. 2)	Advice of English Nature
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds or the Habitats Directives.	Information on the condition of designated sites can be obtained at SSSI unit level from the English Nature website http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi/reportIndex.cfm, selecting **Condition of SSSI units** from **County downloadable data**. Relevant component SSSI Units for international nature conservation designations can be identified from http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk Favourable condition is to be a key target on all units and should be maintained where appropriate or otherwise opportunities taken to enhance units to achieve favourable condition. The National Audit Office holds summary information by Authority for monitoring purposes on environmental as other issues, this can be accessed at http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/InformationPages/Information.aspx?info=START&menu=6
5. The environmental protection objectives relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	There are a number of existing environmental objectives relevant to SEA in the North East; Sustaine, the Integrated Regional Framework for the North East includes a series of objectives for sustainable development with objectives 5-8 including key Regional environmental indicators and targets. The 'State of the Environment Report for the North East of England', The Regional Enhancement Plan and the regional Biodiversity Action Plan Targets are also relevant at the Regional level. County and other Local Biodiversity Action Plans will provide a more local focus for targeting delivery and monitoring. The national PSA target for SSSI to achieve 95% of sites in favourable condition by 2010 is also relevant as development should not result in any loss of or damage to features of interest, either directly or indirectly.

Specific section of the Environmental report (based on the draft SEA Regulations Sch. 2)	Advice of English Nature
6. The likely significant effects on the environment: • Biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), and landscape. and • the inter-relationship between these and other issues listed in the Directive and any • short, medium and long-term effects; permanent and temporary effects; positive and negative effects; and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.	The SEA should recognise that Protected species might be affected by Plan proposals. Information on protected species should be sought from appropriate sources, in the absence of a Regional Environmental Records Centre this will largely be held by voluntary Groups and specialists. Depending on the site specific details of plans specialist surveys may be necessary. European Protected Species must be considered in the context of the Habitats Directive
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	
8. The reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and how the assessment was undertaken.	
9. The measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10 of the Directive.	

ENGLISH HERITAGE

NORTH EAST REGION

Ms Valerie Adams
Planning Officer
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Direct   0191 269 1237
Dial:

Your Ref: VA/kr

Our Ref: AWH/DA-Open Space Strategy-
             Sustainability Appraisal Scoping

Date: 20 June 2006

Dear Ms Adams

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE STRATEGY
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT

I refer to your letter of 13 June 2006 regarding the above. I would comment as follows -

Relationship to other Plans and Programmes

I consider that the SA should include examination of the following selected policies, plans and programmes and other sources of sustainability objectives, some of which you have already identified. This is not an exhaustive list, but includes plans and programmes which have a direct bearing on the historic environment.

International / European

- *European Landscape Convention* - On the 24th of February 2006, the United Kingdom signed the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention - the first international convention for the management and protection of landscape. It will not come into force in the UK until after formal ratification that is subject to the agreement of Parliament, but signature marks an important statement by the UK government and the guidance offered by the Convention (which is an enabling rather than restrictive instrument) can already begin to be followed. It will provide a basis for recognising the importance of landscapes and sharing experience across Europe.

  The European Landscape Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. Landscape is defined as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. The Convention applies this definition to all parts of a country's territory, urban as well as rural areas, to both outstanding and ordinary landscapes, to degraded as well as well-preserved places. The Convention's definition of landscape and its emphasis on action/interaction, human factors and cultural perspectives is well reflected in the UK's national programme of Historic Landscape Characterisation.

  http://www.defra.gov.uk/WILDLIFE-COUNTRYSIDE/issues/landscap/index.htm

  http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm

- *Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (Valetta Convention)* - The Convention contains provisions for the identification and protection of archaeological heritage, its integrated conservation, the control of excavations, the use of metal detectors and the prevention of illicit circulation of archaeological objects, and the dissemination of information. It was ratified by the UK in September 2000, and provides for a broad definition of 'archaeological heritage' that includes 'structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water.

- *Convention for the protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe* (Granada 3rd October 1985)

- *European Spatial Development Perspective* - Paragraph (17) defines balanced spatial development as 'reconciling the social and economic claims for spatial development with the area's ecological and cultural functions and, hence, contributing to a sustainable, and at a larger scale, balanced territorial development'. The 'conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage' is identified as a fundamental goal of European policy (18). This translates into three policy guidelines for spatial development (19) of which 'sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage' is the key environmental objective for promoting sustainable development. This is set in the context of the recognition that 'Natural and cultural heritage in the EU is endangered by economic and social modernisation processes. European cultural landscapes, cities and towns, as well as a variety of natural and historic monuments are part of the European heritage. Its fostering should be an important task for modern architecture, urban and landscape planning in all regions of the EU.'

National
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy March 2005
- PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development - reference to protecting and enhancing the historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside, [Paragraph 5; ensuring high quality design [Paragraph 5]; a high level of protection to the most valued townscapes and landscapes [Paragraph 17]; enhance as well as protect the historic environment and landscape and townscape character [Paragraph 27(ix)]; promotion of design which is appropriate for its context [Paragraph 34-5]; reinforcement of local distinctiveness [Paragraph 38]
- PPG 2: Green Belts – reference to purpose of green belt "to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns" [Paragraph 1.5]
- PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas - paragraphs 12, 15, 16, 17 and 34 are of particular relevance to the historic environment. PPS7 recognises that many country towns and villages are of considerable historic and architectural value. The document seeks a commitment to good design that makes an important contribution to local identity and regional diversity. It supports the need to preserve buildings of historic or architectural importance. It identifies that the historic environment has a role in the economics of the region through tourism and leisure.
- PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, especially Section 5 Transport and traffic management
- PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning
- The Government statement *The Historic Environment: a Force for Our Future* (DCMS 2001).
- PPS 22: Renewable Energy [Paragraph. 9 (World Heritage Sites); Paragraph 11 (other nationally-designated areas)]
- Draft MPS 1 Planning and Minerals. Annex 4 Natural building and roofing stone provision

Regional
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Sustainable Development Framework
- Regional Environmental Strategy
- Regional Cultural Strategy
- Regional Tourism Strategy
- Streets for All – a regional English Heritage guide to the management of streets and public open spaces

County/Local
- World Heritage Site Management Plan
- Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Extensive Urban Surveys, Urban Archaeological Databases
- Landscape Strategies
- Community Strategy / Cultural Strategy
- Local Heritage Strategy
- Relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans
- Urban characterisation (including extensive and intensive assessments of historical significance / rapid / whirlwind e.g. HMRA)
- Relevant SPG /SPD

Baseline Data

It is important that the historic environment is broadly defined; all designated historic assets should be considered together with potential impacts on non-designated features of local historic or architectural interest and value since these can make an important contribution to creating a sense of place and local identity. This covers buildings and other structures and features, archaeological remains, historic open spaces and the wider historic landscape/townscape.

Statutory Designations cover: World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings (all grades), Scheduled Monuments plus other nationally important archaeological sites, areas of archaeological importance, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Conservation Areas - and their settings

Other important considerations include: SMR /HER sites; local list buildings, parks, and features; the character of the wider historic landscape / townscape and other valued historic landscapes; and the potential for unrecorded archaeology.

There are, however, problems in representing the historic environment spatially in an appropriate way. Point data provided by individual designations does not in itself provide a useful overview. Historic landscape characterisation and urban characterisation broaden the understanding of the historic environment by describing the evolution of the present day landscape / townscape and through this develop understanding about what gives a place its distinctive character and sense of place. Data is available from EUS and urban characterisation projects. *Countryside Quality Counts* will provide some measure of the erosion of historic landscape features.

The condition of the historic environment is an important consideration. Existing data sources include the National Buildings at Risk Register. English Heritage is undertaking a review of the national at risk methodologies as applied to listed buildings (Grade I & II*), Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens. Developments in this work should be taken into account in updating baseline and monitoring frameworks. If the Local

authority has undertaken a 'buildings at risk' survey for Grade II listed buildings it should be taken into account.

It is important for the baseline information to be relevant to the particular plan/programme, and there may be a need to look at the wider geographic area in order to assess the likely significant environmental effects (e.g. traffic generation, setting issues).

Information Sources
- General information, national and regional, on the annual state of the historic environment is given in *Heritage Counts* - www.heritagecounts.org.uk
- National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon - www.pastscape.org.uk
- Images of England – comprises more than 240,000 photographs of listed buildings alongside the statutory list description providing a possible photographic monitoring tool - www.imagesofengland.org.uk
- HELM - www.helm.org.uk
- Magic website - www.magic.gov.uk
- Listed Buildings on Line – http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk
- English Heritage annual Buildings at Risk register (Grade I and II* listed buildings only) and structural Scheduled Monuments) [NB the National Register does not cover Grade II listed buildings, the vast majority of listed buildings] – http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1424
- County Historic Environment Records / Sites and Monuments Record
- County Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Extensive and Intensive Urban Surveys (Urban Archaeological Databases - UADs) – refer to local authority and HER/SMR, or English Heritage - http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1294
- Urban characterisation (including extensive and intensive assessments of historical significance / rapid/ whirlwind e.g. HMRA)
- Archaeological Data Service (ADS) provides a gateway to a range of historic environment information sources e.g. HEIRPORT Portal to SMRs. http://ads.ahds.ac.uk
- Aerial photographs – National Mapping Programme Aerial Photographs www.english-heritage.org.uk/nmr
- Local Authority: BAR for grade II listed buildings and buildings of local historic/architectural interest; Conservation Area appraisals; other characterisation initiatives; local lists (buildings, parks and gardens)
- National and Regional skills report - http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.4625
- Resident satisfaction surveys.
- Quality of Life Assessment - http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/Quality/index.asp
- Countryside Quality Counts - http://www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk/

Identification of Environmental (Sustainability) Issues, Opportunities, Problems
The following list provides examples of the environmental problems, issues and opportunities which I would expect authorities to take into account in the SA process.

- Areas of significantly degraded landscape / townscape or areas where, on current trends, there is likely to be further significant loss of landscape/ townscape character or quality
- Areas where development has had or is likely to have significant impact upon the historic environment and or people's enjoyment of it
- Areas where landscape character or quality is being eroded because of changing farming or other land management practices

- Traffic congestion, air quality, noise pollution and other problems affecting the historic environment
- Areas where quality of life including economic and social well being is significantly affected by the above environmental problems.

Devising SA Objectives / Sustainability Appraisal Framework

English Heritage would offer the following as possible SA objectives –

- To preserve, protect and enhance sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.
- To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of cultural and built environment and archaeological assets.
- Preserve, enhance and manage World Heritage Sites, archaeological remains, historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, battlefields and other architectural and historically important features and areas, and their settings.
- Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- Identify, assess and incorporate the physical, social, economic and environmental value of the historic environment in the regeneration of the (authority).
- Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage, historic sites, areas and buildings
- Protect, manage and, where necessary, improve local environmental quality.
- To achieve high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm sensitive to the locality.

Decision-Making Criteria

Page 113 of Appendix 9 *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents* (ODPM 2005b) provides one overarching decision-making criterion that relates to the historic environment.

> **Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas?**

For detailed interpretation and for the purposes of clarification, English Heritage recommends the following menu of questions to support environmental, social and economic objectives.

Environmental Objectives
- Will it protect and/or enhance environmental assets (natural, built and historic)
- Will it preserve and/or enhance the historic environment?
    - will it protect World Heritage Sites
    - Will it preserve archaeological remains and their settings
    - will it preserve listed buildings and structures and their settings
    - Will it preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings
    - Will it protect Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and their settings
    - Will it conserve locally important buildings and townscapes
    - Will it conserve distinctive historic landscapes

- Will it improve the quality of the built and historic environment
- Will it conserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of the townscape and countryside, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place
- Will it respect and improve the distinctive character of the locality

- Will it promote high quality urban design
- Will it improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live
- Will it provide for increased access to, and understanding of, the historic environment

Social Objectives
- Will it increase the social and/or economic benefit derived from the historic environment
- Will it improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live
- Will it engage communities in identifying culturally important features and areas
- Will it provide for increased access to, and understanding of, the historic environment

Economic Objectives
- Will it promote the environmental economy
- Will it promote heritage-led regeneration
- Will it make the best use of existing buildings and physical infrastructure
- Will it increase the social and/or economic benefit derived from the historic environment
- Will it promote heritage based sustainable tourism
- Will it ensure that restoration and repair and maintenance is sympathetic towards the local environment
- Will it support the repair and reuse of existing/historic buildings

Indicators

The selection of Indicators may vary at different stages of the appraisal/assessment process, for example: baseline data and the identification of trends; SA objectives and accompanying indicators; monitoring the significant effects of the plan.

Selecting indicators which are directly linked to SA objectives is a complex process and with respect to the historic environment further exacerbated by the relative lack of consistently monitored data. At the moment English Heritage has to rely on a number/range of proxy indicators. English Heritage's annual series of national and regional reports, *Heritage Counts: State of the Historic Environment*, includes a suite of indicators for monitoring the extent, size and quality of the assets that comprise the historic environment.
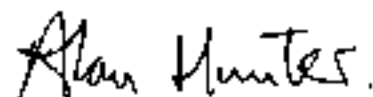
Baseline information may be both quantitative or qualitative, and it is often useful to include a combination of both. (ODPM 2005b, Appendix 6, p93) Because of the limitations of quantitative data, AMRs should present qualitative data as well.
- *Number of Listed Buildings, and number demolished under each grade*
- *Number and % LBs at risk*
- *Number of conservation statements submitted in connection with an application for listed building consent*
- *Buildings of historic or architectural interest being renewed and reused*
- *Number of Scheduled Monuments*
- *Number and % SMs at risk*
- *Number of SMs reported as damaged to English Heritage, data not currently available but will be a feature on future editions of concase*
- *Number of registered historic parks and gardens*
- *Loss or damage to historic view lines and vistas*
- *Number and % RP&Gs at risk*
- *% area of district covered by conservation areas.*
- *Impact of change on the character or appearance of conservation areas*
- *% or areas of historic buildings, sites and areas, including locally listed assets, affected, whether in an adverse or beneficial way*
- *Street / public realm audits, improvements works, de-cluttering works*
- *% residents content with character and appearance of local area*

- *The rate of loss of historic landscape features*
- *Erosion of quality, character and distinctiveness*
- *Impact of change within the Green Belt upon the character, setting or views of the historic city (For Green Belts whose purpose is to safeguard historic cities).*
- *Impact of change on the character, appearance or setting of a World Heritage Site (e.g., Saltaire is producing a capacity study against whose baseline, change in the World Heritage Site can be assessed)*
- *Loss or damage to character or setting of a Registered Battlefield*
- *BVPI 219*
- *buildings of historic or architectural interest are being renewed and reused*
- *improvements are being delivered in the management of historic and archaeological sites, features and areas;*
- *detailed characterisation studies are informing major development proposals;*
- *communities are engaged in identifying culturally important features and areas;*
- *there is greater appreciation and enjoyment of the sub region's historic assets.*

I trust these comments and observations are of some assistance to you. Should you wish to discuss any of the points I have raised I shall be happy to.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Hunter
Regional Planner
e-mail: alan.hunter@english-heritage.org.uk

Our ref NE/1658/23
Your ref VA/kr
Date 13th July

Valerie Adams
Darlington Borough Council
Development & Environment Department
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

North East Region
Cross House, Westgate Road
Newcastle upon Tyne   NE1 4XX

Telephone   0191   269 1622
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Leo.Oliver@countryside.gov.uk
www.countryside.gov.uk

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE STRATEGY SUSTAINABLITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT

Without prejudice

Thank you for your letter requesting comments on the above document.

The Countryside Agency Landscape, Access and Recreation Division (LAR) is responsible for advising government and taking action on issues relating to:

- conserving and protecting our natural landscapes and all their characteristics
- encouraging awareness of, access to and enjoyment of the countryside and green spaces
- achieving the sustainable management and use of the countryside

Our Sustainability Appraisal role embraces only those interests that we consider 'environmental' ie:

- landscape character and quality
- visual amenity and enjoyment of the countryside as a whole
- recreational opportunities
- enjoyment of access land or a public right of way

The Countryside Agency has the following comments to make regarding the Scoping Report:

The Agency is generally pleased with the level of detail and scale of the SA. We are pleased to see the recognition of the importance of Green Corridors; Landscape amenity space; Natural and semi-natural green spaces and informal recreation space.

We welcome the document's consideration of Sustainable Development principles and maximizing environmental quality of open spaces.

The Agency is pleased to see the use of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act; Sustaine; and the State of the Environment Report for the North East.

Although we rarely hold information that is not already in the public domain or in possession of local authorities we produce a wide range of literature which sets out our views and guidance on these aspects. They can therefore assist with consideration of issues and the establishment of baseline information against which to measure changes.

This information is detailed in our publications catalogue or available through our national or regional website (www.countryside.gov.uk). Lists of some relevant local and national publications and research are provided for information. In particular the following publications may be of particular interest in relation to your enquiry:

- The new guidance document *'Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning'* (The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency, 2005) contains the integrated views of the above agencies' approaches to the new spatial planning system. The Supplementary Files to this document are available from our website: www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/PP/index.asp. *Supplementary File 14, Checklist for local development documents* will be used by the Countryside Agency to assess all LDF consultation papers in the transition to the new planning system.

- The State of the Countryside, 2005. (This can be accessed through the national website: www.countryside.gov.uk).

- Our revised planning policy statement *Planning Principles for Landscape, Access and Recreation – moving on from 'Planning Tomorrow's Countryside'* is available on our website at: www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/PPLAR%20%208pp_tcm2-27374.pdf. This provides advice to local planning authorities, to the Government and to developers on how the planning system should operate and evolve to achieve our LAR objectives.

- National Planning Position Statements and North East planning related briefing notes. These briefing notes are designed to offer North East planning officers an informative view of various rural issues and to offer practical guidance whilst exploring topics in the context of sustainable development and the Agency's planning propositions contained in our planning policy publication 'Planning tomorrow's countryside'. A list of the briefing notes can be accessed through our regional website at http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Regions/NorthEast/activities/landscape/p_planning/pan.asp .

Landcape

Our landscape interests include the effects of the plan or programme on the conservation of National Parks, AONBs or Heritage Coasts. They also cover our aspirations for future local landscape character, for which we will largely rely on the sources below:

- Countryside Character Volume 1: North East. This contains details of the countryside character areas covered by your council, and sections on 'Shaping the Future' and can be obtained from Countryside Agency publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorks, LS23 7EP (Telephone 0870 120 6466) or on our website.

- Extensions to this approach through our Countryside Quality Counts work (www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk) and agri-environmental material;

- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland April 2002;

- Countryside Character Network - (www.ccnetwork.org.uk);

Access and Recreation

Potential impacts on access land, public open land and rights of way should be fully considered.

A public consultation exercise is being carried out by the Countryside Agency on Defra's behalf into the best ways to encourage young people, people with disabilities, those from inner cities and black and ethnic communities to visit the countryside. You may wish to refer to this document, available at http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/DR/index.asp .

In terms of rights of way, particular attention should be paid to the Pennine Way National Trail, Cleveland Way National Trail and Hadrian's Wall National Trail. The National Trails

website (www.nationaltrails.gov.uk) provides information including contact details for the National Trail Officer.

The Countryside Agency has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to prepare maps of all open countryside and registered common land in England which have new rights of access. Further information on this process and copies of maps can be found at www.openaccess.gov.uk

If you require more detailed advice on any other documents or information available, please do not hesitate to contact me, or one of my colleagues.

Yours faithfully

Leo Oliver
Countryside Advisor - Positive Planning

Date :   17 July 2006

Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT
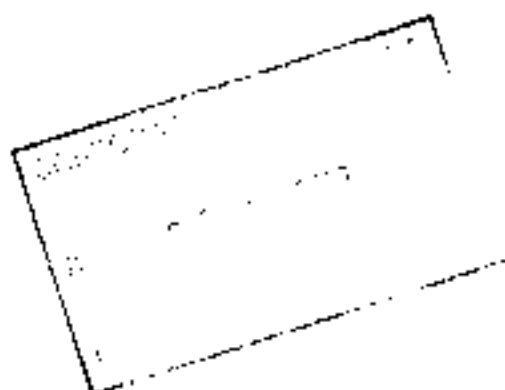
Dear Sir/Madam

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE STRATEGY SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT DARLINGTON

Thank you for submitting to us a copy of your Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for your Council's Open Spaces Strategy. The Agency has studied the Scoping Report from a biodiversity viewpoint and would comment as follows:

The River Tees and River Skerne together with their tributaries are a distinctive landscape feature of the Borough providing for wildlife habitat and valuable amenity resource in the Town and some of the identified villages. The biodiversity value of some existing open spaces along these watercourses could be enhanced through wildlife-friendly maintenance programmes. The Agency supports the promotion of projects to improve the biodiversity of some open spaces (ref Table 5.3) and we would be happy to comment on those projects on watercourses in due course.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in at this early stage of the production of the LDF and look forward to further participation in the near future.

Yours faithfully

TOM O'CONNOR
Planning Liaison Officer
oconnt.York2.NE@environment-agency.gov.uk
Direct Dial: 01904 822607

Appendix 3

Non-statutory Consultees' Responses to Scoping Report

From:	David Plews
Sent:	12 July 2006 10:10
To:	Valerie Adams
Subject:	Open Spaces Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Valerie,

Comments as requested:

p3: I appreciate this is about ODPM guidance but is it worth mentioning when we'll do the Equalities Impact Assessment work?

p5: Thought the vision statement wasn't well phrased. I'd phrase in two sentences. How about:

To enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing and protecting open and green spaces throughout Darlington. These spaces will be:

- well-designed and maintained to promote health, well-being and enjoyment
- accessible to all
- linked to the area's cultural and natural heritage
- sustainable and safe.

p22: All Together Now: a Social Inclusion Strategy fro Darlington was adopted by Council and LSP in early 2005. It is no longer a draft.

p25: Does access arrangements include physical accessibility? Does unlimited access mean wheelchair users/parents with pushchairs have full access?

p26: Are the figures given in hectares? This is not clear.

p32: para 4.9 - you don't have access to open space typology. You have access to an open space. Typology is the study of types.

p53: Is there something about action plans needed here - or does this come under implementation?

p55: My job title is incorrectly listed.

p56: This appendix is about the Distribution of Types of Open Space - this is a clearer title than the existing one.

Hope that's useful.

David Plews
Policy Advisor (Social Inclusion)

Policy Unit,
Chief Executive's Office
Darlington Borough Council,
Town Hall
Feethams,
DARLINGTON
DL1 5QT

01325 388803

Valerie Adams

Another one!

Karen

-----Original Message-----
From: Robert George
Sent: 29 June 2006 11:26
To: Karen Johnson
Cc: Paula Jameson; Philip Roxby
Subject: RE: Darlington Open Space Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Karen, please pass this on to the relevent parties.
The headline message of sustainability as is written in this doc is living within environmental limits. The headline of the headline should be that the sustainability of living things is the top line for measuring if any geographical area is trying to live sustainably. We need to demonstarte that open spaces are contributing to the conservation and ENHANCEMENT of living things, it is not just a matter of their availablity to people but also their availability to wildlie.
considering the value put on the need to improve biodiversity in many of the international and national guidance documents, its part in the open spaces recommendations is very low. This is probably in part to do with the lack of baseline information, the solution to which is presently being discussed internally and looks promising. In the meantime, we could provide an overview which may help to fill the gap. There could also be a greater recognition that the quality assessments should include biodiversity information. This we hope will be available soon so something needs to be in the doc that allows this to be included at a later date.
There is little recognition that the proximity to biodiversity is also a major factor in quality of life. There have been many studies carried out that prove that green space quality is closely linked to biodiversity and that people are insctinctively aware of when a site is healthy, in this way people's own sense of well being is closely associated with the health of the environments.
Rob

-----Original Message-----
From: Karen Johnson
Sent: 15 June 2006 10:12
To: Jen Thompson; Robert George; Sue Dobson
Subject: Darlington Open Space Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Please find attached a copy of the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal for the Open Space Strategy. The Scoping Report outlines the extent of the Open Spaces Strategy, its area of influence and looks at the important economic, social and environmental aspects of its baseline information. The Scoping Report will form the basis of the Sustainability Appraisal Report which will inform the policies in the Open Spaces Strategy. The Strategy will contain planning policies which will be transformed into various planning documents, such as the Core Strategy and the Development Policies Document, as these documents are prepared.

As part of the consultation process for sustainability appraisal we would like to hear your views on the Scoping Report. We would particularly welcome comments on the scale and level of detail of our Report, as this will form the structure of the sustainability appraisal report.

Please could you send all comments to Valerie Adams by the 21 July 2006

Thank you

Karen Johnson

Karen Johnson
Planning Officer - Development and Environment
Darlington Borough Council

Phone (01325) 388047, Fax. (01325) 388900

Valerie Adams

-----Original Message-----
From: Robert George
Sent: 26 June 2006 14:13
To: Karen Johnson
Subject: RE: Darlington Open Space Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

In the section described as defining the scope of the report, nature conservation only gets a passing comment when infact the role urban and urban fringe areas can play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity is very important. Would it not be useful for the scope's definition to contain reference at an early stage to these issues. Sustaining biodiversity in populated areas is about protection and enhancement. The level of existing biodiversity is badly threatened as development accelerates and a better understanding of the baseline and how to enhance it is essential.

PPS9 describes how PA's need to implement policies that protect and enhance BAP habitats. These must be a baseline of sustainability. If we dont protect the the natural world from degredation then sustainability in other respects is meaningless

-----Original Message-----
From: Karen Johnson
Sent: 16 June 2006 10:12
To: Ian Thompson; Robert George; Sue Dobson
Subject: Darlington Open Space Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Please find attached a copy of the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal for the Open Space Strategy. The Scoping Report outlines the extent of the Open Spaces Strategy, its area of influence and looks at the important economic, social and environmental aspects of its baseline information. The Scoping Report will form the basis of the Sustainability Appraisal Report which will inform the policies in the Open Spaces Strategy. The Strategy will contain planning policies which will be transferred into various planning documents, such as the Core Strategy and the Development Policies Document, as these documents are prepared

As part of the consultation process for sustainability appraisal we would like to hear your views on the Scoping Report. We would particularly welcome comments on the scale and level of data of our Report, as this will form the structure of the sustainability appraisal report

Please could you send all comments to Valerie Adams by the 21 July 2006.

Thank you

Karen Johnson

Karen Johnson
Planning Officer - Development and Environment
Darlington Borough Council

Phone (01325) 388047, Fax (01325) 388900
karen.johnson@darlington.gov.uk

<< File: Darlington OSS Scoping Report final June 2006.pdf >>

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Appendix 4

Review of Relevant Plans and Programmes

Relevant Plans and Programmes		
Document	**Key Objectives**	**Implications for OSS**
International		
Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice: The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community *(European Commission)*	Gives strategic direction to the Commission's environmental policy. The programme identifies four environmental priority areas to be tackled for improvements: • Climate Change • Nature and Biodiversity • Environment and Health and quality of life • Natural Resources and Waste Provides the environmental component of the Community's strategy for sustainable development, by considering environmental plans in the context of economic and social conditions. It also makes the link between environment and European objectives for growth and competitiveness	Protect and enhance open spaces and: • Maximise the biodiversity value of open spaces. • Maximise the environmental quality of open spaces. • Maximise the potential of open spaces to contribute to improved health and quality of life.
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development *(United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)*	The declaration reaffirms the commitment of the UN to sustainable development, stating a commitment to building a humane, equitable and caring global society, mindful of the need for human dignity for all. It recognises it is the collective responsibility of the nations of the world to advance and strengthen the pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — at the local, national, regional and global levels. The declaration also sets out a commitment to regularly monitor progress towards the achievement of sustainable development goals and objectives	Protect and enhance open spaces and: • Maximise the biodiversity value of open spaces. • Maximise the environmental quality of open spaces.
European Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna *(European Council)*	The main aim of the Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. The Directive makes a contribution to the general objective of sustainable development. • Maintain or restore designated natural habitat types, and habitats of designated species listed	Maximise the biodiversity value of open spaces and protect any designated habitats within open spaces.

	in annexes 1 and 2 of the directive. • Avoid degrading or destroying Special Areas of Conservation. Any plan, programme or project likely to have significant direct or indirect impact on a designated site should undergo assessment of its implications and propose mitigation/compensatory measures where appropriate.	
Convention for the protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 3rd October 1985) *(European Council)*	The Act identifies that all buildings and structures, groups of buildings and sites that are of historical, architectural, artistic, scientific or social interest should be recognised as items of architectural heritage. Such buildings that are identified as being of architectural heritage should be documented and inventoried in the appropriate manner as stated by the Act. Once recognised and inventoried, the Act states that identified measures should be enforced to ensure that buildings and monuments, groups of buildings and sites are protected and preserved.	
National		
Sustainable Communities Plan, (*OPDM, 2003*)	A national programme of action aimed at building successful, thriving and inclusive communities. Pledges to bring £22 billion worth of action aimed at tackling housing supply and low demand as well as improving the quality of public spaces, with the aim of creating sustainable communities in which people want to live and work with decent homes that people can afford and where they can enjoy a well-designed, accessible and pleasant living and working environment	Improve the quality of open spaces that are accessible for everyone.
Making it Happen: the Northern Way *(ODPM. 2004)*	Considers the impact of the Sustainable Communities Plan. The outcome of which is increased emphasis on regeneration and renewal in a specifically northern context, and recognition of the need to address housing issues in the north in order to maintain resident populations and encourage investment to improve quality of life. The importance of open/green space and wildlife habitats within the local community are highlighted and the role of initiatives such as Community/Urban Forests and the	Improve the quality of open spaces that are accessible for everyone. Provide quality open space on Brownfield sites where appropriate.

	redevelopment of abandoned industrial buildings and Brownfield sites into quality open space are considered in the creation of sustainable communities.	
Securing the Future Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy (*H.M. Government, The Stationery Office, 2005)*	This strategy aims to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. The strategy sets out four agreed priorities – sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource protection and sustainable communities, and a new indicator set, which is more outcome focused, with commitments to look at new indicators such as on wellbeing. Key commitments include: Effective joined up policies at the local level around the vision of sustainable communities with Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements, linked to planning through Local Development Frameworks Placing sustainable development at the heart of the land use planning system and at the core of new planning guidance.	Improve the quality of open spaces that are accessible for everyone. Protect natural resources such as habitats within open spaces.
A Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future *(Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001)*	The government vision for the future of the historic environment is: • Public interest in the historic environment is matched by firm leadership, effective partnerships, and the development of a sound knowledge base from which to develop policies; • The full potential of the historic environment as a learning resource is realised; • The historic environment is accessible to everybody and is seen as something with which the whole of society can identify and engage; • The historic environment is protected and sustained for the benefit of our own and future generations; • The historic environment's importance as an economic asset is skilfully harnessed.	Protect and enhance historic buildings and structures in open spaces including bridges, bandstands and old trees. Protect and enhance open spaces within / part of historic landscapes such as conservation areas.
PPG 2: Green Belts (*ODPM)*	The principle aim of PPG 2 is to prevent urban sprawl and to promote the maintenance of open	

	land so as to shape patterns of urban development, protect the countryside and ensure more sustainable patterns of urban development. The following points are the five main purposes of including land in Green Belts: • To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; • To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; • To protect the countryside from encroachment; • To preserve the special character of historic towns; • To assist in urban regeneration by recycling derelict and other urban land	
PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation *(ODPM)*	Ensure biodiversity and geodiversity is conserved as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development through maintenance of the quality and extent of natural habitat. Enhancement and development of green spaces within developments that recognise both the needs of people and biodiversity. Appropriate consideration of designated sites, protected species, ancient woodland, habitats of principal importance and habitat networks, including cumulative effects.	Protect and enhance biodiversity in open spaces. Protect and enhance designated habitats and species in open spaces.
PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas *(ODPM)*	PPS 7 identifies the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning with regards to the rural areas of England including country towns and villages and the undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of urban areas. Government national policies are based around the following objectives for rural areas: • To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas; • To promote more sustainable patterns of development; • To promote the development of the English regions through the improvement of economic performance, helping full potential to be	

	reached; • To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors	
PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment *(ODPM)*	Government urges local authorities to: • Maintain commitment to managing the historic surroundings • Reflect such commitment in policies and budgeting • Have access to specialist conservation advice in order to make informed decisions	Protect and enhance historic buildings and structures in open spaces including bridges, bandstands and old trees. Protect and enhance open spaces within / part of historic landscapes such as conservation areas.
PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning *(ODPM)*	Development plans should: • Include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings. • Archaeological remains identified and scheduled as being of national importance should normally be earmarked for preservation.	Where open spaces coincide with sites of archaeological interest these sites should be investigated and remains should be earmarked for preservation.
PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation *(ODPM)*	• Supporting an urban renaissance - local networks of high quality and well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe. Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality. • Supporting a rural renewal - the countryside can provide opportunities for recreation and visitors can play an important role in the regeneration of the economies of rural areas. Open spaces within rural settlements and accessibility to local sports and recreational facilities contribute to the quality of life and well being of people who live in rural areas. • Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion - well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in	Ensure open spaces are distributed equitable across the Borough and accessible to all members of the community. Provide open spaces in city centres that can function as nature conservation and biodiversity sites and improve air quality. Provide open spaces that function as places for recreation to support local sports and economies. Promote the use of open space for health activities from walking through to formal sports. Ensure open spaces are accessible to all and via non car modes of transport including cycling, walking and public transport.

| | the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they can bring together members of deprived communities and provide opportunities for people for social interaction.
• Health and well being - open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
• Promoting more sustainable development - by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking and cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport. | |
| Power of Place – The Future of the Historic Environment *(English Heritage)* | This document outlines that major inner-city renewal, rural diversification, edge of village development, traffic calming measures all have the potential to enhance or degrade the existing historic environment and to generate time and resource hungry conflict. It is important there is an early understanding of the character band value of the historic environment.

For local authorities and regional bodies the document recommends:

• Regional development agencies should use investment programmes to promote conservation led renewal as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and regeneration.
• Take full account of the historic environment in preparing community strategies.
• Work with local businesses to use Town Improvement Schemes to improve the management and maintenance of streets, parks and other public spaces.
• Adopt spatial masterplans based on character appraisals as Supplementary Planning Guidance. | Protect and enhance historic buildings and structures in open spaces including bridges, bandstands and old trees.

Protect and enhance open spaces within / part of historic landscapes such as conservation areas. |

	• Ensure local authorities that are dealing with the historic environment have access to relevant information and advice. • Facilitate public access to properly funded and curated Historic Environment Record Centres.	
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (*The Stationery Office)*	The Act aims to: • To make new provision for public access to the countryside; • To amend the law relating to public rights of way; • To enable traffic regulation orders to be made for the purpose of conserving an area's natural beauty; • To amend the law relating to nature conservation and the protection of wildlife; • To make further provision with respect to areas of outstanding natural beauty and connected purposes.	Protect and enhance any sites designated for biodiversity or landscape value in open spaces. Create new pathways and bridleways within open spaces and link open spaces together and to established footpaths. Protect and enhance any public rights of way in open spaces.
Planning Principles for Landscape, Access and Recreation *(Countryside Agency)*	Six principles that should be integrated into plans to ensure adequate consideration of Landscape, Access and Recreation: Relevant principles include: Focus on solutions which bring social, economic and environmental benefits rather than solutions that require mitigation of negative impacts. Respect the character of all landscapes and enhance all landscapes, and protect and enhance the best. Consider development that will sustain the countryside as well as where development should go. Positive objectives should be set for the countryside and then the policy options and decisions needed to achieve them described. There should be a positive role for the community and community planning.	The OSS should include options for open spaces that mainly have a positive impact rather than negative impacts that have to be mitigated. OSS should focus on protecting and enhancing the best open spaces. OSS options should contribute to sustainable uses of open spaces. The objectives of the OSS should be positive and drive the OSS options. The planning and delivery of the OSS options should involve the community.
Diversity Review: Draft	The Diversity Review is being undertaken by the Countryside	The OSS should ensure outdoor recreation is accessible to everyone

Diversity Review Action Plan *(Countryside Agency)*	Agency. It aims to investigate what can be done to support the participation in outdoor recreation of disabled people, black and minority ethnic people, people who live in inner city areas and young people. The Draft Diversity Review Action Plan is under consultation until 30 September 2006. The review comprised: • Research with under-represented groups to establish their needs and perceptions of what is available for them; • Research with providers of outdoor recreation experiences assessing their awareness of the needs of the under-represented groups targeted in the Rural White Paper. The research concluded that: • All the groups researched clearly expressed a desire to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation; • A lack of information and concern about not being made welcome will undermine people's confidence to access outdoor recreation and those without access to a car found transport a major barrier; • A lack of confidence in engaging with diverse groups is also apparent amongst recreation providers. The strategic objectives of the draft Action Plan are to: • Embed diversity and equality principles into the planning and practice of service providers in the outdoor recreation sector; • Create a climate of confidence in under-represented groups about visiting the countryside; • Contribute to cross-cutting Government agendas on social justice within the over-arching framework of sustainable development; • Secure a robust and up to date evidence base to inform action by all stakeholders including comprehensive data on levels and type of participation at local, regional, and national levels. The Act explains methods that must be employed in the	in terms of reaching sites, using sites and being aware of sites. The OSS should have a special focus that will ensure under-represented groups are aware of and can access sites. The OSS should monitor its success in terms of the use of open spaces by under-represented groups post implementation of the strategy.

Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 *(The Stationery Office)*	identification and listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and the measures that may be enforced to restrict works affecting listed buildings. With regards to the maintenance of listed buildings the Act describes the methods that must be taken to ensure that buildings are preserved from deterioration. Such measures extend as far as the compulsory acquisition of a listed building that is seen to be in need of protection.	
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 *(The Stationery Office)*	The Act amends the law with regards to the protection of ancient monuments through provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historic interest. The Act ensures that grants issued for the maintenance and protection of ancient monuments are recovered and provided.	
Regional		
Regional Planning Guidance 1: North East *(Government Office for the North East)*	Sets out the vision and strategy for the sustainable development of the north east region based on four key themes: Regeneration Four priorities are identified to ensure the regeneration of the region: - To accelerate the renaissance of the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations; - To provide job opportunities and support communities in the former coalfield areas; - To adapt and revitalise the region's town and city centres; and - To secure rural regeneration. Conservation is recognised as a key objective of the planning guidance. The guidance aims to ensure that the region's natural resources and open spaces are wisely managed and that the following actions are prioritised: - Biodiversity is maintained and enhanced; - Importance of the region's cultural heritage is recognised and distinctive local character maintained; - Open spaces such as parks, play areas and playing fields are maintained and enhanced to contribute to the quality of life in urban areas and	Protect and enhance open spaces uses, both formal and informal. Protect open space from development. Enhance the biodiversity value of open spaces. Enhance the heritage value of open spaces.

	to promote biodiversity; • The value of areas of informal open space should be recognised; • All areas of open space, even informal areas, should be protected from unnecessary development	
Regional Spatial Strategy *(North East Assembly)*	Part of the statutory Development Plan the RSS sets out a long-term strategy for the spatial development of the North East. Some policies have an end date of 2021, but the overall vision, strategy and general policies are intended to guide development over a longer timescale. It provides the spatial context for the delivery of other regional strategies, in particular the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) and the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF). Creating an attractive and biodiverse natural environment is emphasised as a key element to the creation of sustainable communities and the regeneration of the North East. It is thought high a quality natural environment will encourage tourism; provide leisure, recreational and cultural opportunities; improve health and provide a sense of well-being amongst residents.	Ensure open spaces are distributed equitable across the Borough and accessible to all members of the community. Enhance the biodiversity value of open spaces. Enhance the heritage value of open spaces. Promote the use of open space for health activities from walking through to formal sports.
State of the Environment Report for North East (*The Development Agency for the North East)*	This report provides the baseline conditions for the NE split into a series of subject areas. There is baseline information and objectives/targets for other subject areas that will also be important, most notably Climate Change and Renewables, Air Quality, Land Use, Protected Landscapes, Biodiversity and Heritage Assets. Baseline information in the report for biodiversity and heritage assets shows that the North East has a considerable amount of natural environment/ biodiversity assets. However data from the report also shows that many of these natural and biodiversity sites are in a relatively poor condition.	
Biodiversity Audit of the North East (*Produced by English Nature*	The report contains baseline data for habitats and species in the region, this baseline is compared to	

on Behalf of the North East Biodiversity Forum)	trends nationally, and from this specific targets can be drawn for the future of species and habitats in the North East.	
Heritage Counts: North East chapter *(English Heritage)*	Heritage Counts reports demonstrate the enormous value that can be drawn from investment in historic environments, including quality of life improvements, benefits for regeneration and for the economy.

The report contains baseline data for heritage for the region, this baseline is compared to trends nationally and from this specific targets can be drawn for the future of heritage in the North East. | Protect and enhance historic buildings and structures in open spaces including bridges, bandstands and old trees.

Protect and enhance open spaces within / part of historic landscapes such as conservation areas. |
| Integrated Regional Framework (by SUSTAINE) | Aims to set out an agreed overall direction for the future development of the region based on the principles of sustainable development. The Framework therefore has two key purposes:

• To provide the high level framework and reference point for the future development, implementation, appraisal and review of regional strategies.
• To provide the basis for monitoring and measuring the region's performance in improving people's quality of life now and in the future.
• Objective 8 of SUSTAINE is to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the North East as this is recognised as a key source for sustainability and an essential tool for promoting health and well-being.

• Objective 12 of SUSTAINE highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing the regions cultural heritage and diversity. Concern is raised over the low number parks and gardens in the region. | Ensure open spaces are distributed equitable across the Borough and accessible to all members of the community.

Ensure open spaces are accessible to all and via non car modes of transport including cycling, walking and public transport.

Provide open spaces where there are deficiencies. |
| The revised Regional Cultural Strategy for the North East of England *(Culture North East 2005)* | The strategy identifies the following strategic aims as key responses to the issues, challenges and aspirations of the North East's cultural vision; | |

	• To sustain, develop and celebrate the cultural distinctiveness of the North East; • To prioritise investment in the protection, development and promotion of the region's natural and cultural assets; • To realise the potential of cultural and creative activity in contributing to the raising of educational standards and the development of quality educational facilities; • To improve opportunities for individuals and communities across the region to fully experience and participate in cultural activity; • To stimulate sustainable economic growth of the region's tourism, cultural and creative industries; • To develop effective qualitative and quantitative information on the cultural sector to facilitate planning, advocacy, leadership and evaluation	
North East England Tourism Strategy 2005-2010 *(One North East)*	The strategy highlights the benefits that the development of the tourism sector in the North East can bring to the development of: employment, the environment, health, education and social cohesion in the area. The strategy describes ways in which such development can be achieved and identifies the ten objectives against which tourism development in the area can be judged. The strategy aims to: • Attract more domestic and overseas tourists to the region; • Increase visitors' average spend and increase day visitor spend; • Increase visits throughout the year; • Increase employment in tourism and tourism related businesses; • Improve the productivity of the regional tourism economy; • Accelerate the rate of investment in the tourism product; • Improve the quality of the tourism product; • Improve the skills of the tourism workforce; • Improve levels of visitor satisfaction in the North	

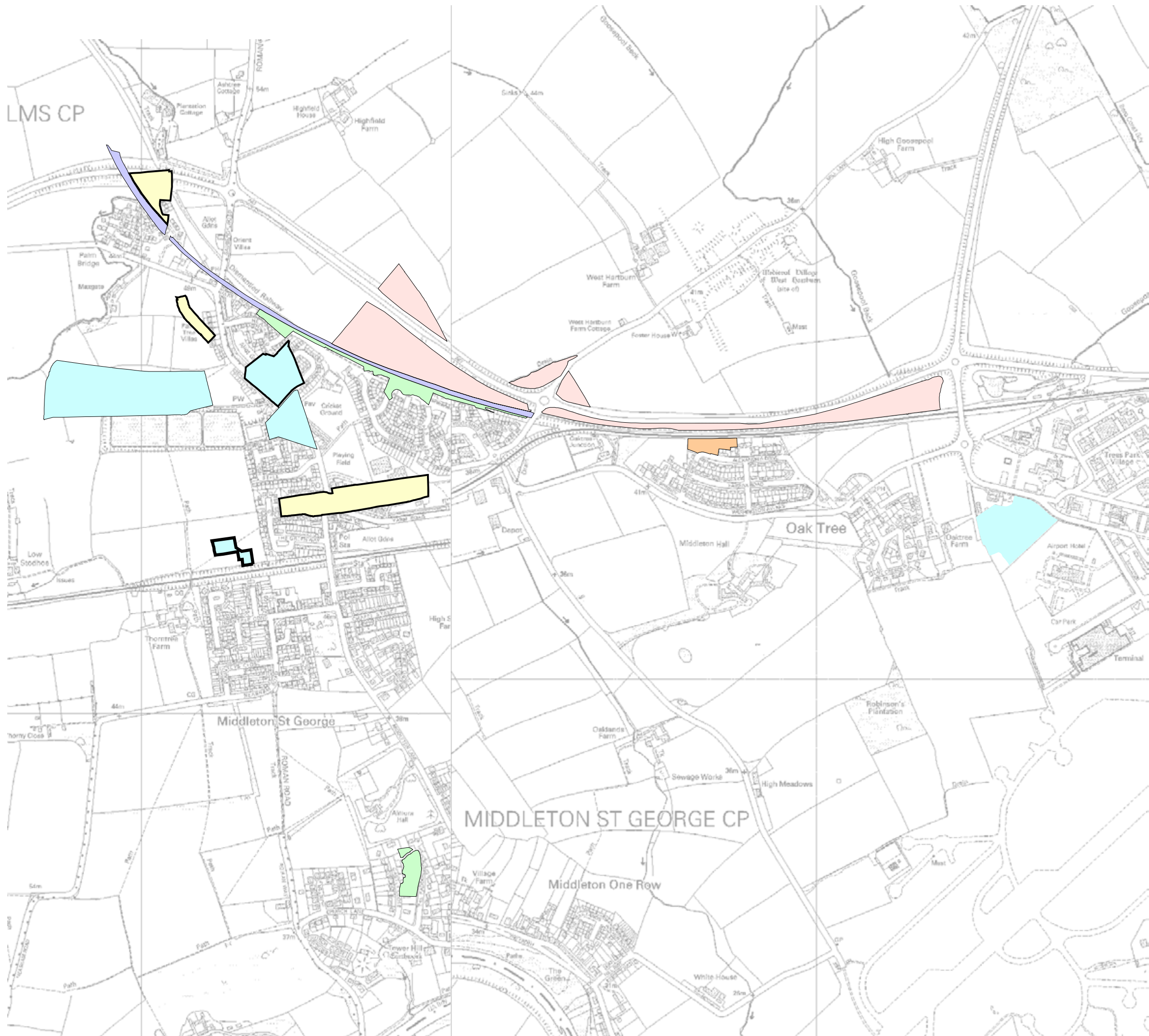|		
	East; • Enhance and conserve the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets	
Streets for All – North East (*English Heritage*)	The manual guides the management of streets and public open spaces with the aim of improving appearance through a reduction in street clutter, a co-ordination of design and the reinforcement of local character. The manual highlights the importance of managing change without detracting from the uniqueness of character, provided through historic paving, buildings and street furniture.	
Sub-Regional		
Tees Valley Structure Plan 2004 (*Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit*)	Aims to shape the future land use development of the Tees Valley by protecting its environment whilst promoting economic growth and social cohesion. Prepared by the five unitary authorities - Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees - the Structure Plan provides a strategic framework for Local Plans whilst taking account of the government's Regional Planning Guidance For The North East to the Tees Valley area. The plan aims to improve areas where environmental quality is currently poor, and ensure that new development enhances environmental quality. Specifically the plan aims to: • Conserve areas and sites given special protection under various landscape, wildlife and geological designations; • Maintain and improve bio-diversity • Protect and enhance conservation areas, sites of archaeological importance; • Achieve a better quality urban environment through new development, environmental improvement and regeneration schemes, and by focussing on previously developed land, and • Minimising environmental damage caused by new development	Protect and enhance open spaces with sites of biodiversity value and with species / habitat designations. Protect and enhance open spaces with sites of geodiversity value. Protect and enhance open spaces with heritage value or within heritage landscapes. Provide open spaces in the city to act as 'green lungs' that will improve the aesthetic environment and air quality. Protect and enhance open spaces with sites of biodiversity value and with species / habitat designations. Protect and enhance open spaces with sites of geodiversity value.
Durham Biodiversity Action Plan 1999 (*Durham County Council*)	Aims to promote Biodiversity and Geological Conservation as important aspects of conserving biodiversity.	

Local		
Darlington Community Strategy *(Darlington Partnership 2003)*	Darlington's Community Strategy has been produced as the result of extensive consultation and involvement, in order to ensure the priorities reflect the concerns of local people and organisations. It identifies the opportunities and key issues for Darlington in the next decade. It aims to achieve the following: • An area creating and sharing prosperity - enhance the economy and share the benefits with all the community. • A location for learning, achievement and leisure – raise aspirations and attainment, promote creativity and leisure. • A place for living safely and well - reduce crime, make people feel safer and improve health. • A high quality environment with excellent communication links - make the most of the Borough's heritage, market town appeal and location. The early priorities of the Community Strategy are: • Improving the local economy • Raising educational achievement • Promoting inclusive communities	Ensure open spaces are safe for everyone and crime free. Maximise the educational value of open spaces for the community. Maximise the environmental value of open spaces including their aesthetics, biodiversity and heritage value. Ensure opens pace are accessible to all groups and by non car transport modes.
Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy *(The Darlington Partnership)*	Aims to 'reduce deprivation in the eleven most disadvantaged wards within the Borough and improve the life chances of residents living within these areas'. Neighbourhood Renewal involves reversing the spiral of decline in disadvantaged neighbourhoods by delivering economic prosperity and jobs, safer communities, good education, decent housing and better health, as well as fostering a new sense of community among residents. Its aim is to ensure that within 20 years time, no-one is disadvantaged by where they live. The enhancement of the local environment is one of the key strategic priorities of the Strategy. The strategy aims to create a more attractive environment through the tackling of sustainability issues to protect the natural environment such as litter and graffiti. The need for increased youth provision is also identified by the Strategy.	Ensure open space provision is equitable and focus attention on deprived areas to reduce inequalities in open space provision and its quality. Provide open space to improve local environments and health. Reduce vandalism in open spaces. Protect and enhance the natural environment of open spaces.

Darlington Borough Local Plan 1997 (*Darlington Borough Council*)	The statutory local plan covering the whole of the Borough of Darlington. The Plan guides most day-to-day planning decisions in the Borough. It sets the Council's policies for the control of development. It also puts forward proposals for the development and use of land, including allocating sites for specific purposes. The plan will be replaced by the Local Development Framework which is being devised at this moment in time. Policy E3 of the Local Plan protects all open land within the urban area, and seeks to maintain and enhance the appearance and nature conservation of all open land. Parklands (Policy E9), recreational facilities (Policy R8), playing pitches (Policy R9) and allotments (Policy R19) should all be maintained to a high quality and are protected against development. The Plan ensures that all new development of ten or more dwellings make provision for open space for recreation (policy R6) and that wherever possible new development incorporates open land, landscaping and the creation of wildlife habitats (Policy E15). Open space must be accessible to all members of the community (Policy R1) and it be must ensured that access to amenity open space, playing fields and children's play areas is maintained in accordance to national standards (Policy R4).	Ensure adequate provision for all open space types. Protect and enhance open spaces for all open space types. Improve the nature conservation value of open spaces and create wildlife habitats. Protect open space from development. Open space should be accessible to all members of the community.
All Together Now: Social Inclusion Strategy *(The Darlington Partnership, 2005)*	Aims to improve the life chances of those who are experiencing, and those who are at risk of experiencing, discrimination and disadvantage. One of the key aims of the Strategy is to ensure fair access to local services and facilities.	Open space should be accessible to all members of the community. Focus provision of open space and improved quality of open space in areas that are deprived of open space.

Appendix 5

Location plans of open spaces in Darlington, Heighington, Middleton St. George and Hurworth

Appendix 5

Primary Purpose

Allotment, community gardens & urban farms

Amenity greenspace

Green corridors

Informal recreation

Outdoor sports facilities

Natural & semi natural urban greenspace, woodland & forest

Provision for children & teenagers

HURWORTH CP

Hurworth-on-Tees

Hurworth Place

Croft-on-Tees

River Tees

River Tees

Primary Purpose

Allotment, community gardens & urban farms

Cemeteries & churchyards

Informal recreation

Outdoor sports facilities

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE AUDIT
OVERVIEW OF PROVISION IN
HEIGHINGTON
MAP 4

Primary Purpose

- Allotment, community gardens & urban farms
- Cemeteries & Churchyards
- Informal recreation
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Provision for children & teenagers

Wards Boundaries

Allotments, community gardens & urban farms

Cemeteries & Churchyards

Civic Space

Green Corridor

Informal Recreation

Landscape Amenity

Natural & semi natural urban greenspace, woodland & forest

Outdoor sports facilities

Park or Garden
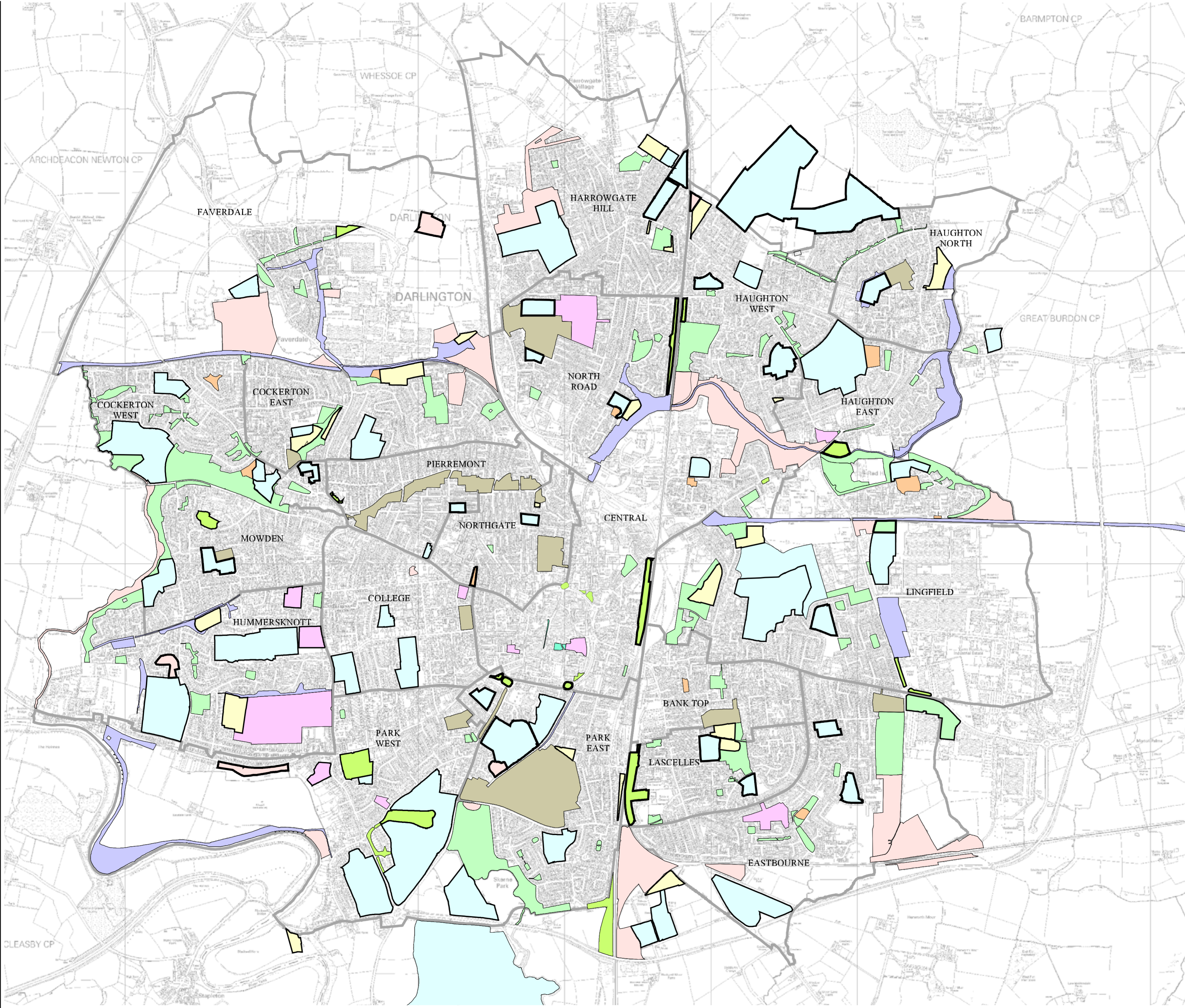
Provision for children & young people

Appendix 6

Baseline Overview

Table 1 Overall provision, quality, value and access by open space typology (Darlington Open Spaces Audit, 2006)

Open Space Type (by primary purpose)	Number of Sites	Total Site Area (ha)	Quality Rating (Number of Sites) (*= lowest)					Value rating (Number of sites)			Access Arrangements		
			*	**	***	****	*****	Low	Medium	High	No access or unauthorised	Formal agreement or informal agreement or members/tenants only	Unlimited
Parks & gardens	12	55.4	0	2	6	3	1	0	1	11	0	0	12
Children & young people (equipped play and youth provision)	16	9.21	1	2	5	7	0	1	4	10	1	0	15
Informal recreation	101	140.6	6	30	48	15	2	17	18	64	1	2	98
Landscape Amenity	21	25.8	4	6	9	2	0	3	1	17	7	7	7
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	30	247.6	6	7	14	3	0	2	7	21	5	0	25
Green corridors	20	109.3	1	8	9	2	0	2	1	17	0	0	20
Outdoor sports facilities	67	297.9	Not assessed in this way								23	37	7
Allotments, etc.	27	34.9	Not assessed in this way								0	27	0
Cemeteries, etc.	13	38.8	0	2	8	7	0	0	3	10	0	3	10
Civic spaces	3	1.7	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2
ALL	**310**	**961.24**	**18**	**57**	**102**	**39**	**3**	**25**	**35**	**153**	**37**	**77**	**196**

Table 2 Total area (hectares) of open space typology by location (Darlington Open Spaces Audit, 2006)

Open Space Type (by primary purpose)	Darlington Urban Area					Middleton St. George/ Middleton One Row	Hurworth/ Hurworth Place	Heighington
	North West (Area 1 Urban)	North Central (Area 2 Urban)	South West (Area 3 Urban)	South East (Area 4 Urban)	Haughton (Area 5 Urban)			
Parks & gardens	4.06	13.09	30.58	5.22	2.48	0	0	0
Children & young people: equipped play and youth provision	1.55	1.1	0	1.68	4.23	0.47	0	0.19
Informal recreation	30.18	8.88	30.03	32.78	23.27	5.36	8.31	1.8
Landscape Amenity	2.12	5.13	12.76	4.19	1.58	0	0	0
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	26.59	10.22	11.65	35.44	153.61	10.06	0	0
Green corridors	11.86	7.42	58.83	15.18	13.7	2.28	0	0
Outdoor sports facilities	22.00	16.07	137.16	38.56	54.07	11.24	13.43	5.39
Allotments, etc.	6.06	3.23	7.35	8.52	4.12	3.85	0.82	0.98
Cemeteries, etc.	0	9.08	22.06	3.28	1.00	0	0.31	0.73
Civic spaces	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALL	**104.42**	**75.92**	**310.42**	**144.85**	**258.06**	**33.26**	**22.87**	**9.09**

Table 3 Total provision of each open space typology by ward (Darlington Open Spaces Audit, 2006)

Ward	Total Open Space	Total Population	Total Open Space/1000 population	Park or garden	Children & young people (no. sites)	Informal recreation	Landscape amenity	Natural & semi-natural greenspace	Green corridors	Outdoor sports facilities	Allotments	Cemeteries etc.	Civic Spaces
Bank Top	5.61	3757	1.49	2.84	2	4.23	0	0	0	2.84	1.38	0	0
Central	26.81	3522	7.61	0	2	23.79	4.77	23.72	18.34	0.97	0	1.56	0.4
Cockerton East	31.56	5213	6.05	0.86	3	18.16	0	8.51	6.11	7.99	5.41	0	0
Cockerton West	33.13	4139	8.00	0	2	20.19	0	14.02	0	12.94	0	0	0
College	9.53	3751	2.54	1.39	0	2.17	0.53	0.25	0	9.28	0	0.53	0
Eastbourne	48.58	5066	9.59	2.38	3	30.78	3.28	20.36	0	10.09	0	3.28	0
Faverdale	36.0	1653	21.78	0	0	30.54	1.96	29.04	5.75	0.7	0	0	0
Harrowgate Hill	28.62	6084	4.7	0	1	26.42	0	9.27	0	13.23	2.2	0	0
Haughton East	47.91	4173	11.48	0	4	50.36	8.11	13.34	19.74	7.68	0	1.0	0
Haughton North	9.26	3430	2.7	2.48	1	5.44	0	3.27	0.79	1.4	2.42	0	0
Haughton West	25.06	5473	4.58	0	2	17.18	4.14	5.16	3.17	6.74	1.70	0	0
Hummersknott	35.69	3544	10.07	0	1	36.77	21.79	29.62	5.63	11.63	5.20	21.73	0
Lascelles	10.69	3561	3.0	0	1	5.63	3.46	3.46	0	1.6	0	0	0
Lingfield	51.37	3599	14.27	0	2	18.33	0.73	1.19	5.45	26.87	5.44	0	0
Mowden	12.21	3652	3.34	1.04	1	10.01	1.11	0.15	0	5.09	0	0	0
Northgate	4.98	4297	1.16	3.95	2	4.41	0.6	0	0	3.95	0	0	0
North Road	23.4	6001	3.9	9.14	2	26.74	10.53	8.8	7.42	11.01	0.93	7.52	0
Park East	56.88	6028	9.44	26.53	1	44.41	1.24	17.63	0.4	19.11	1.17	0	0
Park West	107.44	3471	30.95	1.62	2	6.41	44.61	57.11	52.8	40.62	0	2.06	0
Pierremont	5.03	5528	0.91	3.20	1	4.5	0.16	3.2	0	0.37	0	0	1.3

Table 4 Total provision of open space by typology and sub area (Darlington Open Spaces Audit, 2006)

Sub Area	Total Open Space	Total Population	Total Open Space/1000 population	Park or garden	Children & young people (no. sites)	Informal recreation	Landscape amenity	Natural & semi-natural greenspace	Green corridors	Outdoor sports facilities	Allotments	Cemeteries etc.	Civic Spaces
Area 1 Urban	105.72	16533	6.39	4.06	6	73.39	2.12	54.77	11.86	22.0	6.06	0	1.3
Area 2 Urban	65.87	19904	3.31	13.09	7	63.02	16.3	23.85	7.42	29.16	3.23	9.08	0.4
Area 3 Urban	288.36	20446	14.10	30.58	5	99.77	72.95	108.43	58.83	164.31	7.35	24.32	0
Area 4 Urban	141.57	15983	8.86	5.22	8	82.59	7.47	38.9	15.18	41.4	8.52	3.28	0
Area 5 Urban	257.06	13076	19.65	2.48	7	211.51	6.08	167.72	32.31	52.52	4.12	1.0	0
All urban area	**858.58**	**85942**	**9.99**	**55.43**	**33**	**530.28**	**104.92**	**393.67**	**125.6**	**309.39**	**29.28**	**36.68**	**1.7**
Middleton St. George	33.26	3735	9.85	0	2	24.62	0	10.55	2.28	11.24	3.85	0	0
Hurworth/ Hurworth Place	22.56	3070	6.36	0	1	9.99	0.31	0	0	18.11	0.82	0.31	0
Heighington	8.36	1405	5.95	0	1	7.29	0.73	0	0	5.39	0.98	0.73	0
All study area	**922.76**	**94152**	**9.80**	**55.43**	**37**	**572.18**	**105.96**	**404.22**	**127.9**	**344.13**	**34.90**	**37.72**	**1.7**

Table 5 Accessibility of each open space typology by ward

Ward	Total Open Space (1)	Total Population	Total Open Space/1000 population	Total open space with unlimited access	Total open space with access by formal agreement, informal agreement or for members/tenants only	Open space where there is no access or it is unauthorised	Total accessible open space	Total accessible space/1000 population.
Bank Top	5.61	3757	1.49	4.23	1.38	0	5.61	1.49
Central	26.81	3522	7.61	23.1	0.97	2.74	24.07	6.83
Cockerton East	31.56	5213	6.05	18.16	13.4	0	31.56	6.05
Cockerton West	33.13	4139	8.00	20.19	12.36	0.58	32.55	7.86
College	9.53	3751	2.54	1.64	7.64	0.25	9.28	2.47
Eastbourne	48.58	5066	9.59	33.91	13.32	1.35	47.23	9.32
Faverdale	36.0	1653	21.78	30.54	3.31	2.15	33.85	20.48
Harrowgate Hill	28.62	6084	4.7	13.19	12.48	2.95	25.67	4.22
Haughton East	47.91	4173	11.48	38.89	7.68	1.34	46.57	11.16
Haughton North	9.26	3430	2.7	5.44	2.42	1.4	7.86	2.29
Haughton West	25.06	5473	4.58	20.3	1.7	3.06	22.0	4.02
Hummersknott	35.69	3544	10.07	17.57	16.83	1.29	34.36	9.70
Lascelles	10.69	3561	3.0	5.63	0	5.06	5.63	1.58
Lingfield	51.37	3599	14.27	29.63	19.44	2.3	49.07	13.63
Mowden	12.21	3652	3.34	6.01	5.26	0.94	11.27	3.09
Northgate	4.98	6001	1.16	4.41	0.24	0.33	4.65	0.77
North Road	23.4	4297	3.9	19.22	0.93	3.25	20.15	4.69
Park East	56.88	6028	9.44	44.41	6.09	6.38	50.5	8.38
Park West	107.44	3471	30.95	58.16	47.12	2.16	105.28	30.33
Pierremont	5.03	5528	0.91	3.2	1.83	0	5.03	0.91

Table 6 Accessibility of each open space typology by area / village

Area/Village	Total Open Space	Total Population	Total Open Space/1000 population	Total open space with unlimited access	Total open space with access by formal agreement, informal agreement or for members/tenants only	Open space where there is no access or it is unauthorised	Total accessible open space	Total accessible space/1000 population.
Middleton St. George	33.26	3735	8.90	24.49	8.4	0.37	32.89	8.81
Hurworth/ Hurworth Place	22.56	3070	6.36	8.31	3.66	7.56	15.63	5.09
Heighington	8.36	1405	5.95	6.56	1.8	0	8.36	5.95
Darlington NW	105.72	16533	6.39	72.09	30.9	2.73	102.99	6.23
Darlington N-Central	65.87	19904	3.31	41.58	14.62	9.67	56.2	2.82
Darlington SW	288.36	20446	14.1	193.42	83.92	11.02	277.34	13.56
Darlington SE	141.57	15983	8.75	97.02	35.84	8.71	132.86	8.31
Haughton	257.06	13076	6.92	201.61	50.05	5.4	251.66	19.25
Urban Area	858.58	85942	9.99	605.72	218.36	37.53	824.08	9.59
Study Area	922.76	94152	9.80	645.08	232.23	45.46	880.96	9.36

Table 7 Overview of spatial provision for 5 main open space typologies

Open Space Type	Overview of Provision (for the main urban area of Darlington)
Outdoor sports facilities	100% of all wards within 1000m catchment.
Parks and Gardens	Deficiencies in Cockerton West, Central, Lingfield, Eastbourne, Faverdale, Haughton West, Haughton East, Hammersknott, Park West and Harrowgate Hill for 600m catchment. Deficiencies in Faverdale, Haughton West, Haughton East, Hammersknott, Park West and Harrowgate Hill for 1000m catchment.
Parks and Gardens and other similar open spaces	100% of all wards within 1000m catchment.
Open spaces for Children and Young People	Main deficiencies in the West at Faverdale, Hammersknott, College and Central for 400m catchment.
Allotments	Deficiencies in Cockerton West, Pierremont, College, Central, Lingfield, Eastbourne, Faverdale, Haughton East and Park West for 600m catchment. Deficiencies in College, Cockerton West, Lingfield, Eastbourne and Haughton East for 1000m catchment.
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	Deficiencies in Bank top and Lingfield for 1000m catchment.

Heritage features in Open Spaces in Darlington

Table 8 Listed Buildings

Feature	Location	Open space type / Quality score from open spaces audit	Ward	Condition (use 'listed buildings at risk register' – when this has been completed)
Saint Cuthbert's Church (Grade I listed)	Saint Cuthbert's Cemetery	Cemetery (within) / 4*	Central	
Public House (Grade II listed)	Saint Cuthbert's Cemetery	Cemetery (adjacent) / 4*	Central	
Museum	Saint	Cemetery (adjacent)	Central	

Feature	Location	Open space type / Quality score from open spaces audit	Ward	Condition (use 'listed buildings at risk register' – when this has been completed)
(Grade II listed)	Cuthbert's Cemetery	/3*		
Buildings at Friends School Yard (1 grade II* and 1 grade II)	Powlett Street Cemetery	Cemetery (adjacent) / 3*	Central	
Holy Trinity Church (Grade II*	Holy Trinity Church yard	Cemetery (within) / 2*	College	
War memorial (Grade II)	Hollyhurst Road informal recreation space	Informal recreation / 4* (within)	Northgate	
Building (Grade II)	Hollyhurst Road informal recreation space	Informal recreation / 4* (adjacent)	Northgate	
Bandstand (Grade II)	North Lodge Park	Outdoor sports / 3* (within)	Northgate	
North Lodge (Grade II)	North Lodge Park	Outdoor sports / 3* (adjacent)	Northgate	
Education Centre (Grade II)	North Lodge Park	Outdoor sports / 3* (adjacent)	Northgate	
Russell Street Bridge (Grade II)	Russell Street / St Cuthbert's Way	Informal Recreation / 2*	Central	
Teresa's Hospice (Grade II)	Green Park	Equipped Play Ground / 3* (adjacent)	Park West	
Harewood Grove terrace properties	Harewood Grove / Harewood Terrace	Informal Recreation / 3* (adjacent)	Park West	
Blackwell Grange Hotel (Grade II*)	Blackwell Range Golf Course	Outdoor sports / 3* (adjacent)	Park west	
Building to east of Blackwell Grange Hotel (Grade II)	Blackwell Range Golf Course	Outdoor sports / 3* (adjacent)	Park west	
Bandstand at roller skating	South Park	Outdoor sports / 3* (within)	Park East	

Feature	Location	Open space type / Quality score from open spaces audit	Ward	Condition (use 'listed buildings at risk register' – when this has been completed)
rink (Grade II)				
Fountain next to the lake (Grade II)	South Park (within)	Outdoor sports / 3*	Park East	
Building on Grange Road (Grade II)	South Park (adjacent)	Outdoor sports / 3*	Park East	
St. Andrew's Church (Grade I)	St Andrews Church Yard, Salter's Lane South	Cemetery / 3* (within)	Haughton East	
Railway Centre and Museum (Grade II*)	Hopetown Lane / North Road Station	Informal Recreation / 3* (adjacent)	Pierremont	
Building, Hopetown Lane (Grade II)	Hopetown Lane / North Road Station	Informal Recreation / 3* (adjacent)	Pierremont	
Building, Longfield Road	North End Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports / 3*	North Road	
Rise Carr Primary School	North End Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports / 3*	North Road	

Table 9 Conservation Areas and s

Feature	Types of open Space incorporated and their quality (according to Open Spaces Audit).	Condition of CA (to be completed when CA's have been assessed)
Stanhope road / Grange Road Conservation Area	South Park / 3* Green Park / 3* Harewood Grove informal recreation / 3* Stanhope Green / 4* Holy Trinity Church Yard / 2* The Woodlands natural site/ 3* Darlington George Dent Nursery School / N/A	
Cockerton Village Conservation Area and	Cockerton Green / 3*	
Town Centre Conservation	Powlett Street Cemetery / 3* Saint Cuthbert's Cemetery / 4*	

Area		
Victoria Embankment Conservation Area	River Skerne Corridor / 2*	
Northgate Conservation Area	North Lodge Park / 3* Brinkburn Dene / 2* (equipped play area) 2* (park/garden) Brinkburn Dene Allotment / N/A	
Haughton Village Conservation Area and (Ted Fletcher Court only)	Haughton Village Riding School Ted Fletcher Court (Cemetery and Green corridor 3* / Riding School 2* / River Skerne Corridor 4*	
Hurworth Conservation Area	Informal recreation (West End / Church View) / 4* Hurworth Grange Community Centre 3* Church Yard / 3*	
Heighington Conservation Area and	Church Yard / 4* Outdoor Sports Facilities / 2* and 4* Informal Recreation / 4*	
Middleton One Row Conservation Area	Informal recreation (Middleton Lane / Church Lane) / 2* Green Corridor and Informal Recreation (adjacent to River Tees) / 4*	

Table 10 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Feature	Location	Open space type / Quality score from open spaces audit	Ward	Condition (to be completed once an assessment of SAM's has been undertaken)
Coniscliffe Road Water Works	River Tees Green Corridor	Green Corridor / 4*	Park West	

Table 11 Village Greens

Feature	Open space type and quality	Condition
Cockerton Green	Informal recreation / 3*	
Green at Ted Fletcher Court	Green Corridor / 3*	
Hurworth Green	Informal recreation on West End / Church View / 4*	
Middleton One Row Green	Informal Recreation site adjacent to River Tees / 4*	
Heighington Green	Informal Recreation site / 4*	

Nature conservation and biodiversity designated sites in open spaces in Darlington

Table 12 Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Location	Open space type / quality	Habitat condition (to be completed once habitats have been assessed)
LNR Drinkfield Marsh	Natural site at Drinkfield / 4*	
LNR Maidendale	Natural site at Maidendale / 3*	
LNR Geneva Wood	Natural site at Geneva Wood / 2*	
LNR Neasham Road	Natural site at Neasham Road / 3*	
LNR The Whinnies, Middleton St. George	Natural site at Middleton St. George / 3*	
LNR Land off Skerne at Riverside, Haughton	Natural site in Haughton / 3*	
LNR Brinkburn Pond	Natural Site at Honeypot Lane / Hartington Way / 3*	
SNCI Horsefield Pond	Natural site at Honeypot Lane / 1*	
SNCI Faverdale Balancing Tank	Natural Site at Faverdale Industrial Estate / 1*	
SNCI Brinkburn Pond	Natural Site at Honeypot Lane / Hartington Way / 3*	
SNCI Darchem Meadows	Green Corridor / 2* and Natural Site 4*, West Auckland Road	
SNCI Baydale Beck	Natural site along Baydale Beck from Staindrop Road to River Tees / 3*	
SNCI Nunnery Wood	Nunnery Lane Green Corridor / 3*	
SNCI Edinburgh Drive Wood	Natural site, Edinburgh Drive / 3*	
SNCI West Cemetery	West Cemetery 4*	
SNCI Rockwell Pastures	Natural Site at river Skerne / Martindale Road / 3*	
SNCI Skerne Ponds	Skerne Corridor (north of Cleveland trading Estate) / 3*	
SNCI St Williams's Pond	Natural site at River View Industrial Estate / 3*	
SNCI McMullen Road Wetland	Natural site at McMullen Road / 1*	
SNCI High Firth Moor	Natural site at Fifth Moor / 3*	
SNCI Brankin Moor Ecology Site	Natural site at Brankin Moor / 3*	

Table 13 Great Crested Newt sites

| Location	Open space type / quality	Habitat condition
Faverdale Balancing Tank	Natural Site at Faverdale Industrial Estate / 1*	
Horsefield Pond	Natural site at Honeypot Lane / 1*	
Faverdale Black Path (two ponds)	Natural Site at Faverdale Black Path / south of Cycle Playground) / 2*	
Rockwell Pastures	Natural Site at river Skerne / Martindale Road / 3*	
Albert Hill Pond	Natural Site at Albert Hill / 3*	
Hundens Park Road	Informal Recreation Site at Hundens Park Road / 2*	
Firth Moor Pond	Natural Site at Firth Moor / 3*	
Blackwell Range Golf Course	Outdoor Sports, Blackwell Range Golf Course / 3*	

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)

There are no SSSI's in open spaces in Darlington Borough.

Ancient Woodland

There are no ancient woodlands in open spaces in Darlington Borough.

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE AUDIT
OVERVIEW OF PROVISION IN
MIDDLETON ST. GEORGE
PLAN 3

January 2006
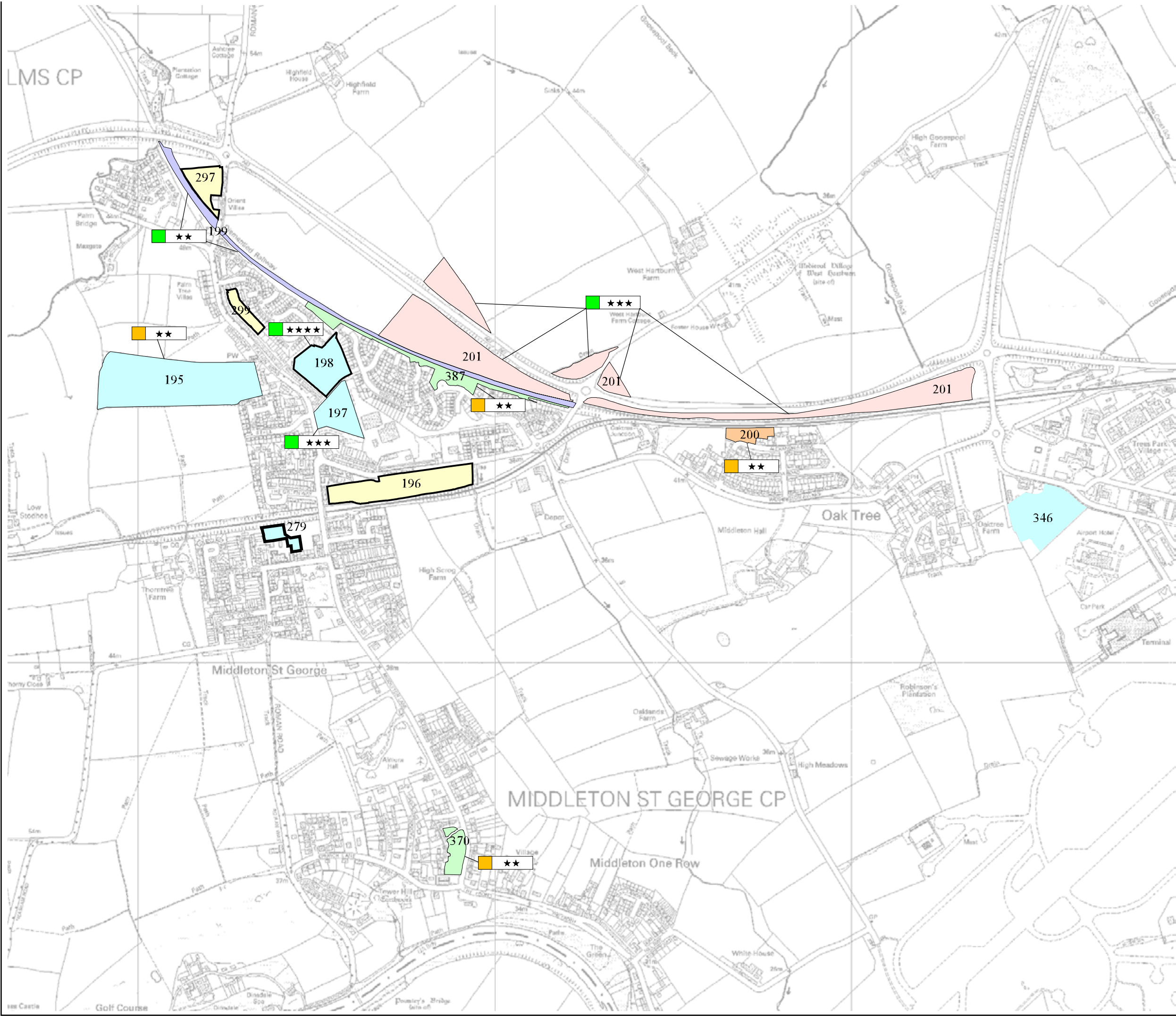
Primary Purpose

Allotment, community gardens & urban farms

Amenity greenspace

Green corridors

Informal recreation

Outdoor sports facilities

Natural & semi natural urban greenspace,
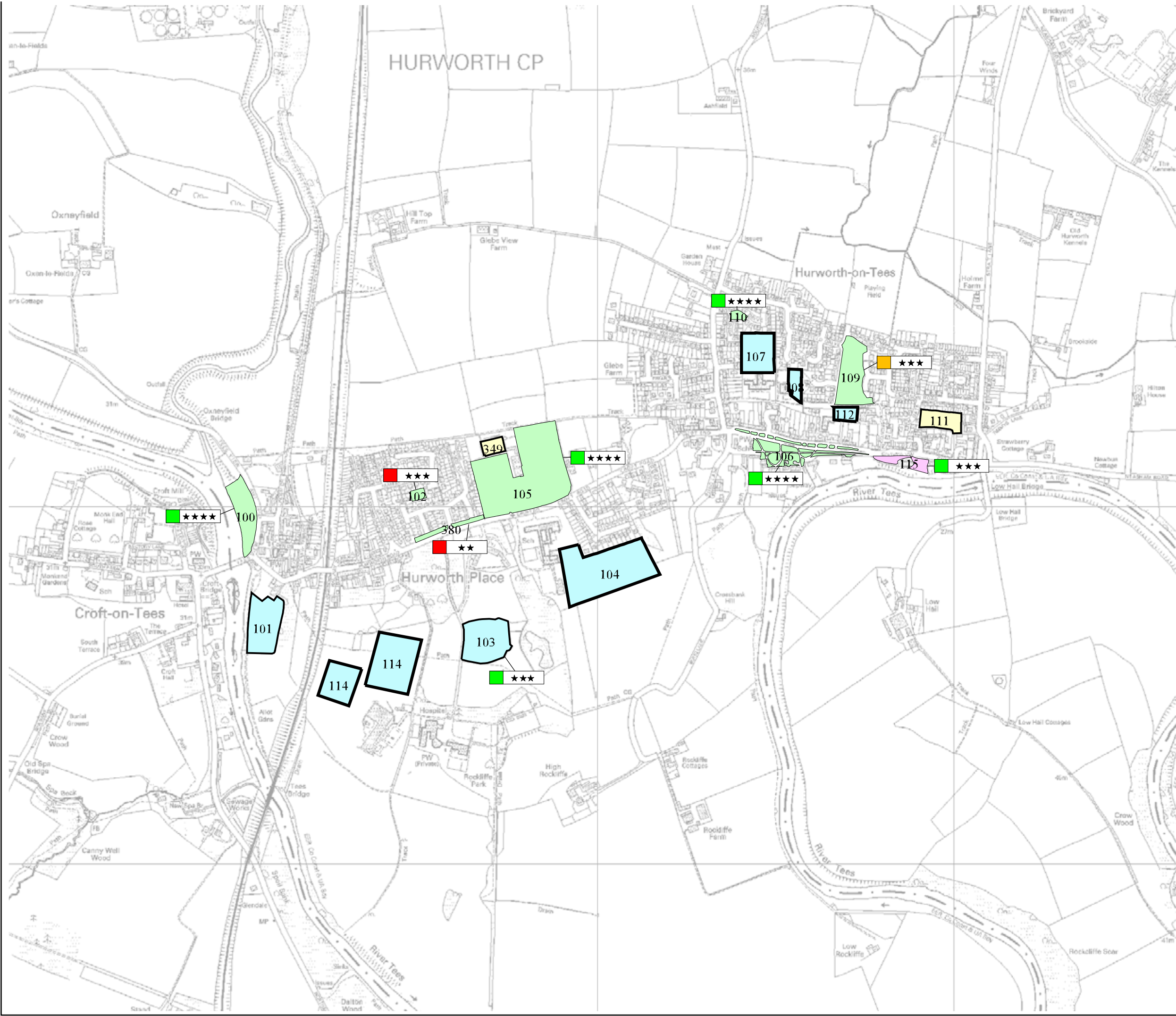woodland & forest

Provision for children & teenagers

Quality

★
★★
★★★
★★★★
★★★★★

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE AUDIT
OVERVIEW OF PROVISION IN
HURWORTH/HURWORTH PLACE

PLAN 2

March 2006

Primary Purpose

Allotment, community gardens & urban farms

Cemeteries & churchyards

Informal recreation

Outdoor sports facilities

Quality

★
★★
★★★
★★★★
★★★★★

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE AUDIT
OVERVIEW OF PROVISION IN
HEIGHINGTON
PLAN 4

January 2006

HEIGHINGTON CP

Heighington

Heighington

Primary Purpose
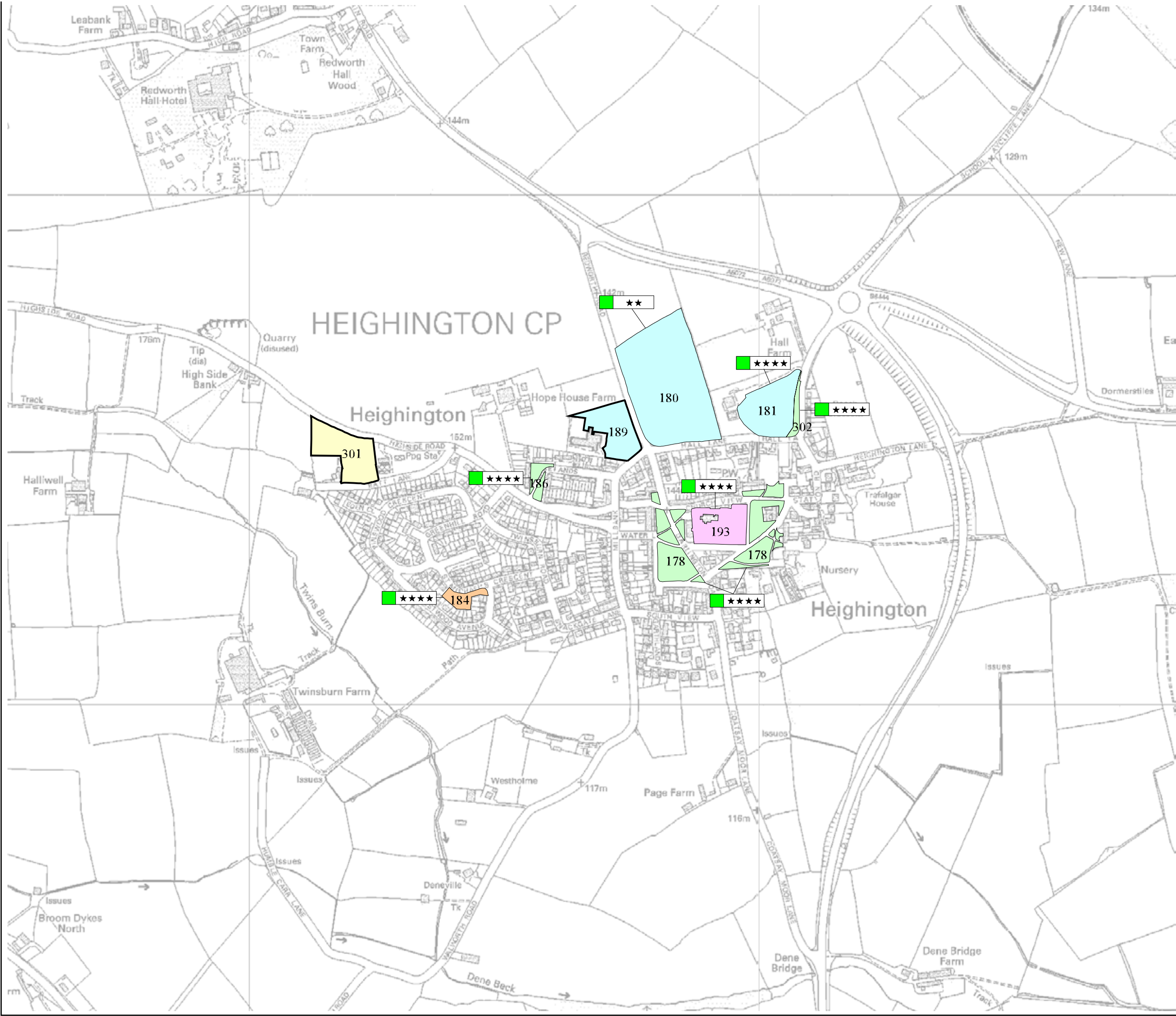
Allotment, community gardens & urban farms

Cemeteries & Churchyards

Informal recreation

Outdoor sports facilities

Provision for children & teenagers

Quality

★
★★
★★★
★★★★
★★★★★

DARLINGTON OPEN SPACE AUDIT
OVERVIEW OF PROVISION IN THE
MAIN URBAN AREA
PLAN 1

January 2006
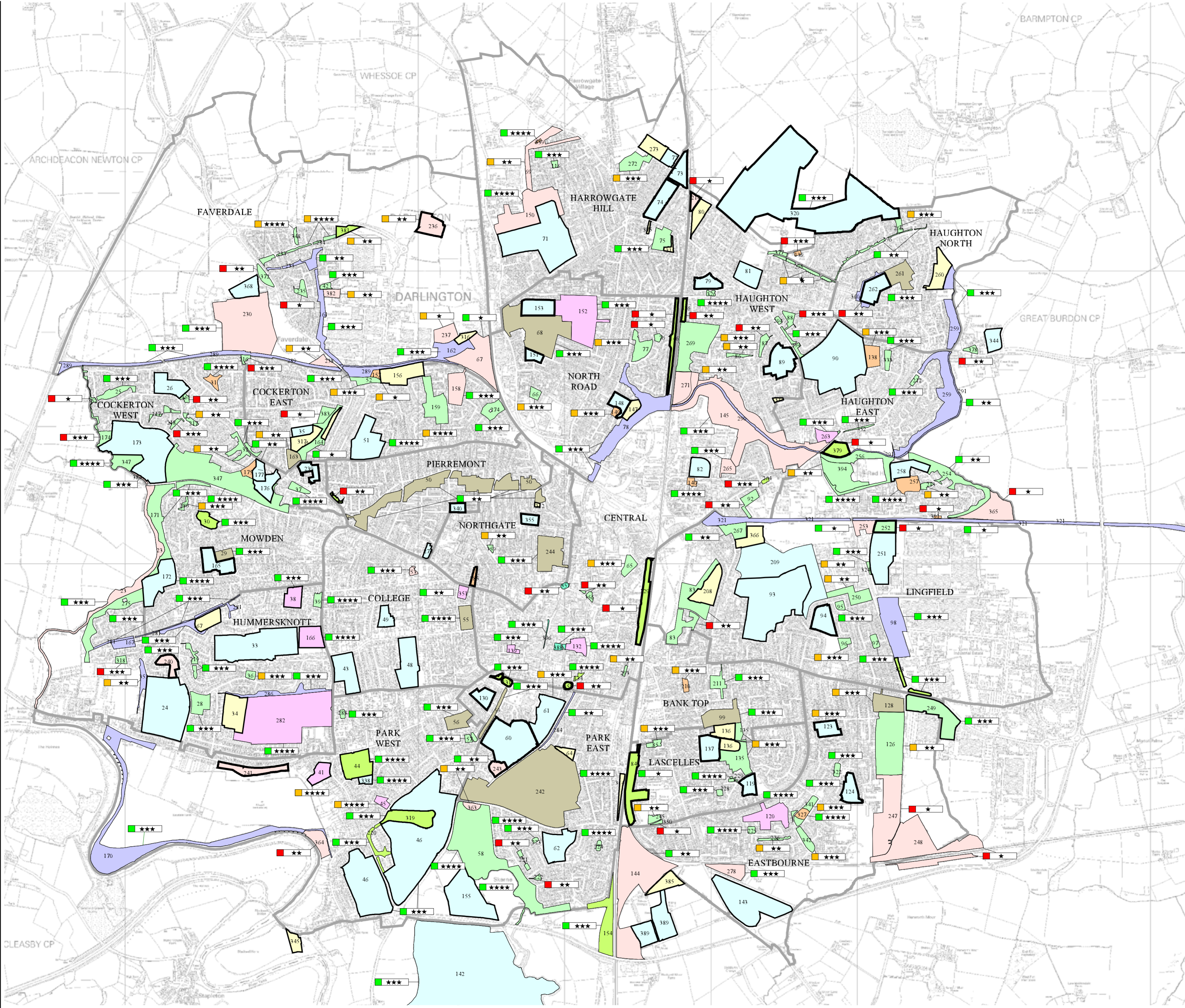
Wards Boundaries

Allotments, community gardens & urban farms

Cemeteries & Churchyards

Civic Space

Green Corridor

Informal Recreation

Landscape Amenity

Natural & semi natural urban greenspace, woodland & forest

Outdoor sports facilities

Park or Garden

Provision for children & young people

Quality
★
★★
★★★
★★★★
★★★★★

Appendix 7

SA Framework

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1. To promote community safety	*Reduce crime and fear of crime* *Reduce anti social behaviour*	% of open spaces covered by CCTV					
		Number of complaints over vandalism in open spaces			N/A		
		Crimes against the person in open spaces			N/A		
		% of open spaces incorporation designing out crime in open spaces	N/A				
Appraisal Objective 2. To encourage a healthy lifestyle with good accessibility to sport, play and recreation and reduce	*Improve access to health, active leisure and recreational facilities* *Promote a healthy living environment* *Help mental health and improve well being*	Number of open spaces participating in Obesity Plan	N/A		N/A		
		Accidents and injuries in open spaces			N/A		
		% residents finding it easy to access open space	N/A				

N/A

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
inequalities in health	*Improve and intensify use of facilities or access to facilities* *Provide accessibility to indoor and outdoor leisure activity and facilities to promote an increase in physical activity* *Improve the biodiversity value of open spaces (see SA objective 5)*	% population satisfaction: with parks and open space with children's play areas	58.6% (2002) 65.9% (2005) 29.5% (2002) 32% (2005)				Community Strategy Action Plan
		Open space provision per 1000 population	9.8ha (2006)			6.5ha of open space per 1000 people.	Darlington Open Spaces Audit
		% dwellings within 300m of a 0.1ha open space					Darlington Core Strategy
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 3. To promote strong and inclusive communities	*Narrow the inequality gap* *Build community confidence* *Increase public involvement* *Improve access to services*	% of people who live in wards that live in deprived wards for Physical Environment 10% of deprived wards 25% of deprived wards					Community Strategy Action Plan
		% of residents surveyed who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	79.2% (2002) 77.9% (2005)	99%			Community Strategy Action Plan
		% of residents surveyed who consider their local area is getting worse	33.6% (2002) 29% (2005)				Community Strategy Action Plan
		% of open spaces accessible to disabled people					OSS SA Forum Group

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
		Number of events in open spaces					OSS SA Forum Group
		% of new developments that achieve open space standards (6.2ha per 1000 population)					OSS SA Forum Group
		Quantity of open space for the following types (for Darlington and 3 largest village / urban area): • Parks and Gardens • Equipped play areas • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space	• 55.43ha / 55.43ha • - • 37 sites / 33sites • 572.18ha/530.28ha • 404.22/393.67ha	100%			Open Space Audit Results, 2006

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
		Quantity of open space for the following types (per 1000 population) • Parks and Gardens • Equipped play areas • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space	 • 1 site per 486 • 1 site for every 555 (under 17) • 6.17ha • 4.29ha			 • 1.2ha • 1 site per 450 children (under 12) • 1 per 500 children (under 17) • 6.0ha • 5ha No other quantity standards for other types of open space.	Open Space Audit Results, 2006

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
		Accessibility of open space for the following types:					
		• Parks and Gardens	•			• 99% population within 15min walk (1000m)	Open Space Audit Results, 2006
		• Equipped play areas	• 83% children (under 12years)			• 85% children (under 12years) 10min walk (666m)	
		• Areas for children and young people	•			• 99% dwellings within 300m	
		• Informal recreation	•			• 99% of dwellings within 300m	
		• Natural and semi natural green space	• 60% within 9min walk (600m)			• 75% within 9min walk (600m)	
		• Outdoor sports facilities	• 100% population within 1000m			• 100% population within 1000m	
		• Allotments	• 95% of population within 15min walk (1000m)			• 95% of population within 15min walk (1000m)	
						No other access standards for other types of open space.	

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
		Quality of open space for the following types: • Parks and Gardens • Areas for children and young people • Informal recreation • Natural and semi natural green space • Green corridors • Landscape Amenity • Cemeteries • Civic spaces	 • 33% 4*+ (all sites) • 80% 3*+ (all sites) • 48% 3*+ 17% 4*+ (all sites) • 47% 3*+ 10% 4*+ (all sites) • 55% 3*+ (all sites) • 52% 3*+ • 41% 4*+ • 0% 5*+	N/A	N/A	 • 100% primary sites to be 4* + • 100% primary sites to be 3* + • 100% primary sites to be 3* + and 20% to be 4*+ • 75% primary sites to 3* + and 20% to be 4*+ • 100% primary sites to be 3*+ • 70% of sites to be 3*+ • 100% 4* + • 100% 5* No other quality standards for other types of open space.	Open Space Audit Results, 2006
		Number of Friends Groups and members of Friend Groups for open spaces / parks		N/A	N/A		OSS SA Forum Group
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 4. To promote an	*Increase opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport*	Length of cycle routes in open spaces					OSS SA Forum Group

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
increase in trips by walking, cycling and public transport		Length of footpaths in open spaces					OSS SA Forum Group
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 5. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	*Improve the environmental quality of open spaces to stimulate and enhance biodiversity* *Protect and enhance natural habitats and species*	Number and area of Local Nature Reserves	2 (2002) 2 (2005)	N/A	N/A		Community Strategy Action Plan
		No of priority habitats identified in BAP in open spaces			N/A		Community Strategy Action Plan
		Number of management programmes for areas of biodiversity importance identified in DBAP Wet-Woodland Wetland Hedgerows Unimproved Grassland	N/A	N/A	N/A		OSS SA Forum Group

		Amount of woodland
		    Community
		        woodland
		    Ancient woodland
			3 (2004)
			5 (2005)
			10 (2004)
			10 (2005)
				N/A	N/A		Community Strategy Action Plan

		Number / % of open spaces achieving green flag standard					OSS SA Forum Group

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
		Number of Tree Preservation Orders / Group Tree Preservation Orders in open spaces		N/A	N/A		OSS SA Forum Group
		% opens spaces that achieve quality standard: 1* 2* 3* 4* 5*	 8% 21% 48% 21% 2%	N/A	N/A	 70% 3* 25% 4*	Open Space Audit Results, 2006
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 6. To promote access to the quality countryside and open spaces	*Improve the countryside, parks and open spaces* *Provide better recreation and play facilities*	Area of land managed for nature conservation and public access	30 (2002) 153 (2005)	N/A	N/A	155 (2006)	Community Strategy Action Plan
		% residents and visitors satisfaction with access to publicly accessible green space	91% (2002) 88% (2005)	N/A	N/A		Community Strategy Action Plan
		Proportion of designated play areas meeting minimum European standards	31% (2003) 100% (2005)				Community Strategy Action Plan
		Population living within 300m of 2ha of natural green space	100%				Darlington Open Spaces Audit

100%

99%

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
Sustainability Appraisal Objective 7. To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings	*Safeguard and enhance buildings and areas of archaeological, architectural heritage or historical importance and their setting.*	No of Listed Buildings in open spaces under each grade • Grade I • Grade II* • Grade II • % at risk			N/A		English Heritage
	Safeguard and enhance areas of important townscapes, including the public realm and their setting. *Improve the quality of design in new developments.*	Registered Historic Parks and Gardens • Number • Area % at risk	N/A 2 (2002) 2 (2005) 41ha (2002) 41ha (2005)	N/A	N/A		English Heritage
	Promote and enhance the unique and special character of the Darlington countryside.	No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in open spaces and % at risk / damaged			N/A		Darlington Borough Council
	Promote and enhance access to, and understanding of heritage assets and engage local communities.	Number of conservation areas in / adjacent to conservation areas and their quality					
	Secure the sustainability of	Number of archaeological sites within open spaces and the number of projects to protect and enhance them	N/A				

SA objectives	SA Sub objectives	Indicators	Darlington	North East	National	Target	Source
	heritage buildings and assets through economic uses and tourism uses in a manner sympathetic to their historic context.	Number of historic assets being renewed and reused in open spaces					
		% of visitors content with the character and appearance of open spaces					

Appendix 8

Objectives Appraisal Matrix

Open Spaces Strategy Objectives Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	To provide a sustainable amount of high quality, accessible open spaces across the Borough to meet the changing needs and expectations of local people, now and for the foreseeable future	To provide a variety of open spaces and facilities with unrestricted access, where appropriate, which are equally accessible by all.	To secure improvements in the design and management of open spaces, so that they are attractive and safe for everyone, enhance their recreational, biodiversity and aesthetic quality and conserve the Borough's distinctive history and culture	To build and sustain strong relationships with the local community and other agencies to help improve and shape change on open spaces
1. To promote community safety	Compatible + High quality spaces will be safer as they are better maintained	Neutral	Compatible ++ Safer open spaces will contribute to community safety.	Compatible ++ Building good community relationships is an important component in good design that should improve maintenance and safety of open spaces. By building strong relationships between the community and open spaces the community are more likely to take ownership of local open spaces promoting more use which will contribute to community safety in terms of the condition of the space and crime within the space.
2. To encourage a healthy lifestyle with good accessibility to sport, play and recreation and reduce inequalities in health	Compatible ++ A sustainable amount of open space will not only ensure adequate quantity and accessibility of open space that can be used to maintain a health lifestyle through the provision of space for recreation, sports and nature conservation. Also by ensuring there is not over provision, there will be more resources to maintain the quality of open spaces which will mean their function will be better maintained whether it is for recreation, sports or nature conservation purposes.	Compatible ++ Provision of a variety of open spaces that are widely accessible will contribute to choice in recreation, sports and nature conservation facilities for the community to use to have a healthy lifestyle.	Compatible ++ Improvements to open spaces in terms of their management and design will ensure their functions are better maintained. This will encourage community use of recreation, sports and nature conservation facilities in open spaces and contribute to a healthy lifestyle.	Compatible + By building strong relationships between the community and open spaces the community are more likely to take ownership of local open spaces promoting better understanding of the facilities provided at open spaces and more use of open spaces contributing to a healthier lifestyle.
3. To promote strong and inclusive communities	Compatible + A sustainable amount of open space will ensure adequate quantity and accessibility of open space across the whole community addressing any deficiencies in open space that has led to current inequality in open space provision.	Compatible + Provision of a variety of open spaces that are widely accessible will contribute to choice in recreation, sports and nature conservation facilities addressing any deficiencies in open space that has lead to current inequality in open space provision.	Compatible + Improvements to open spaces in terms of their management and design will ensure their functions are better maintained. This will ensure the variety in open spaces is realised across Darlington addressing any deficiencies in open space that has lead to current inequality in open space provision.	Compatible ++ By building strong relationships between the community and open spaces the community are more likely to take ownership of local open spaces promoting more use of open spaces which will contribute to inclusive communities.

Open Spaces Strategy Objectives Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	To provide a sustainable amount of high quality, accessible open spaces across the Borough to meet the changing needs and expectations of local people, now and for the foreseeable future	To provide a variety of open spaces and facilities with unrestricted access, where appropriate, which are equally accessible by all.	To secure improvements in the design and management of open spaces, so that they are attractive and safe for everyone, enhance their recreational, biodiversity and aesthetic quality and conserve the Borough's distinctive history and culture	To build and sustain strong relationships with the local community and other agencies to help improve and shape change on open spaces
4. To promote an increase in trips by walking, cycling and public transport	Compatible + Provision of a sustainable amount of open space will reduce the need to travel by car to open spaces and make it more feasible to reach open spaces by walking and cycling. Open spaces can also be made more accessible through the provision of public transport to the strategic open spaces such as the large main parks and nature reserves.	Compatible + I would say the equal access means that whatever part of the Borough you live in you can get to open spaces readily There will be more equal access to open spaces across the Borough as the OSS will provide a variety of more accessible open spaces. More equal access will mean people are more likely to be able to walk to meet the open spaces they want to visit.	Compatible +? If local open spaces are of better quality more people are more likely to be able to walk to meet their open spaces needs as the spaces they want to visit will be closer.	Compatible + By building strong relationships between the community and open spaces the community are more likely to be knowledgeable of sustainable travel options to reach open spaces.
5. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	Compatible + A sustainable amount of open space will not only ensure adequate quantity and accessibility of open space that can be used for nature conservation purposes but also by ensuring there is not over provision, there will be more resources to maintain the quality of open spaces which will mean their nature conservation function will be better maintained.	Neutral	Compatible ++ Improvements to open spaces in terms of their management and design will ensure open spaces with nature conservation / biodiversity functions are better maintained.	Compatible + Better understanding of the function of open spaces will contribute to a better appreciation from the community for the nature conservation and biodiversity value of open spaces which are often misunderstood for being untidy or unkempt.
6. To promote access to the quality countryside and open spaces	Compatible + Provision of a sustainable amount of open space will promote easier access to open space as it will be provided according to local need.	Compatible ++ Removing restrictions to open spaces and making some open spaces more accessible for everyone to use will promote access to open space and the countryside.	Compatible ++ Improved quality open spaces will mean more people will want to use open spaces thus enhancing enhance access to open spaces.	Compatible + By building strong relationships with the community, their awareness of local open spaces will increase, and through their active involvement, any barriers to access arising from fear and poor management reduced..
7. To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural	Compatible + Provision of a sustainable amount of open space will ensure there is not over provision of open space and there will be more resources to maintain the aesthetic quality of open spaces. Potential Conflict -?	Potential conflict - / Compatible + Providing a variety of more accessible open spaces could change open space types to meet access needs for each type. Some open spaces can detract from landscape value such as creating sports field from a natural site. However	Compatible ++ Improvements to open spaces in terms of their management and design will ensure open spaces with heritage and cultural value functions are better maintained.	Compatible + Better understanding of the function of open spaces will contribute to a better appreciation from the community for the heritage and cultural value of open spaces which may help protect and enhance them.

Open Spaces Strategy Objectives Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	To provide a sustainable amount of high quality, accessible open spaces across the Borough to meet the changing needs and expectations of local people, now and for the foreseeable future	To provide a variety of open spaces and facilities with unrestricted access, where appropriate, which are equally accessible by all.	To secure improvements in the design and management of open spaces, so that they are attractive and safe for everyone, enhance their recreational, biodiversity and aesthetic quality and conserve the Borough's distinctive history and culture	To build and sustain strong relationships with the local community and other agencies to help improve and shape change on open spaces
landscapes and townscapes and their settings	Provision of a sustainable amount of open space in Darlington could result in loss of some open space This could have a negative impact on local distinctiveness and setting.	this could also lead to bland open space types being developed into more aesthetically pleasing open space types.		

Appendix 9

Open Spaces Strategy Options
(1st draft before SA workshop amendments)

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
General Approach	The Local Plan open space policies for Recreation, Leisure and Community focus on providing and safeguarding open space amounts, locations and forms suited to sporting, recreation and play needs of all residents and their access. Other Local Plan policies for Environment are also applicable which focus on retaining and enhancing the amenity value of open space.	Addressing inequalities, cherishing most valuable open spaces, working in partnership to enhance open spaces.	Improving the poorest quality open spaces, i.e. bottom up approach.
Protecting and caring for existing valuable open spaces	LP Policy E3: In considering proposals to develop any area of open land within the urban development limit, the council will seek to maintain the usefulness and enhance the appearance and nature conservation interest of open spaces. Development will not be granted permission that will inflict harm on: • Visual relief • Character and appearance of a locality • Sports facilities meeting the standard set in Policy R4 • Formal recreation / informal recreation facilities or horticulture • Internal continuity or linkages with open countryside • Areas recognised for their nature conservation / wildlife interest.	Identification of a top tier of open space sites, with more robust policy protection. Open space safeguarding related to function, need and value.	-
	Existing approach set out in LP Policy E3. Protected sites will be limited to those sites designated in the 'Open Land Network' (include map in an appendix)	Justifying the redevelopment of all or part of existing open spaces. Criteria for schemes involving redevelopment of open space.	- SPD

Standards for open space provision	Based on LP Policy E4:
	
	The Council will seek to ensure that all forms of recreational open space within the urban area maintain a standard of 3.6ha per 1000 population.
	
	This should be broken down as follows for major open space serving a town wide population:
	    3. Playing pitches for youth and adult use – 1.6ha
	    4. Informal / Passive recreational use – 0.8ha
	
	For local open space serving a neighbourhood population:
	    4. Children's play – equipped playgrounds – 0.2ha
	    5. Children's play – areas for active games – 0.4ha
		Quantity standard of 6.5ha/1000 people (6.2ha per 1000 population of open space which is accessible)
		
		Accessibility: a space of 0.1ha within 300m of 90% dwellings.
		
		Quality: 70% of 3 star quality or above, with variation within urban area of no more than +/-15%
			7.1ha/1000 population (existing level)
			60% of 3 star quality or above.

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
	6. Informal / Passive recreation use – 0.6ha The Council will also seek to ensure that an entrance to an open space equipped for children's play lies within 400m safe walk of every dwelling.		
Strategies for specific types of open spaces • Parks	Existing commitments to maintain strategic role of South Park and to develop West Park.	Four strategic parks at North Park, South Park, West Park and the Denes, and a network of high quality local parks serving the east of the urban area.	As proposed approach, but create an additional strategic park within the eastern part of the urban area.
• Children & Young People	No distinction between strategic and local play sites. Accessibility standard of 400m from all homes for equipped play. Management/maintenance according to identified local needs and condition of equipment or facilities. Accessibility of 600m straight line distance without crossing A or B road included in Childrens Play SAG.	Identification of strategic and local play areas. Introduction of quantity and accessibility standards, so that equipped play sites are within 10 mins walk (400m straight line distance) of where most children live, and young people's sites within 15mins (600m straight line). Introduction of quality standards for young people's provision.	-
• Outdoor Sports Facilities	No accessibility standard, except for playing pitches (i.e. only cricket, rugby, football, hockey). Playing pitch standard of 1.6ha/1000 people, though not specifically accessible for community use.	Introduction of accessibility standard (1000m from all homes). Securing greater use of existing facilities. Playing pitch standard of 1.05ha accessible playing pitches/1000 people.	-
• Natural and Semi-natural Open Spaces	LP Policy R12: So as to encourage public access to open land and the countryside, the existing network of public rights of way will be extended and the new recreation routes will be created. Routes should improve access from built-up areas for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and horse-riders. LP Policy R13: The Council will aim (where appropriate in the interests of amenity, convenience or nature conservation) to link open space footpath and landscape provisions with adjoining provisions creating interconnecting networks of open space. No quantity, quality or accessibility standards.	Identifies future strategic countryside sites in Barmpton Lane/Skerningham area. The will result in a quantity standard of 5ha/1000 people Quality standard? Accessibility (60% people in urban area within 9 minutes walk of a site) standards set.	Addition of one large countryside site (e.g. Merrybent) will result in lower quantity standard than proposed option of 4.6ha/1000. Quality standard? 75% accessibility standard. Would require some deeply urban open spaces to be managed as nature sites, rather than as currently.

Theme	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
• Informal Recreation	(Existing provision is 6.17ha/1000). LP policy R4: 1.4ha/1000 population (Existing provision is 6.17ha/1000). Where major open space is serving a town wide population 0.8ha must be provided for informal/passive recreation. Where local open space is serving a neighbourhood population 0.6ha must be provided for informal/passive recreation. No quality or accessibility standard.	6.0ha/1000 population One space within 300m of 99% homes Quality of all primary sites at least 3*.	6.17ha/1000 population.
• Other Types of Open Space	No existing standards for these in Local Plan policies.	Quality and accessibility standards for civic spaces, allotments, green corridors, cemeteries and landscape amenity areas.	Addition of quantity standards.
Open space provision associated with new development	LP Policy R6: New residential developments of ten or more dwellings should make provision for open space for recreation, providing a minimum standard of 1.2ha per 1000 population.	Open space provision with all developments of 5 dwellings or more.	-
	LP Policy R7 New development should meet the following requirements in terms of open space: Open space for recreation 0.6ha per 1,000 population. Areas for children's active games - 0.4ha / 4m2 Equipped children's playgrounds - 0.2ha / 2m2	Site by site negotiation of amount and size of open space provision, based on identified local needs as well as those arising from the development, and taking account of nature of site.	-
	LP Policy EP6 Development of employment sites in open land will be required to achieve a high standard of design and landscaping with regard to the following employment areas: Yarn road Industrial Area Faverdale Industrial Area Heighington Lane Business Park Extension	To seek a broader quantity and range (including wildlife sites) of open spaces as part of new employment developments on prominent sites.	-
Approach for the villages	Local plan open space policy applies within the urban development limit, thus there are no open spaces policies in the Local Plan for the villages.	No specific quantity standards. Quality standards as per the urban area. Working with Parish Councils and local communities to address identified specific needs.	Set overall quality and quantity standards that are slightly lower than for the main urban area, to reflect the absence of parks, and the additional countryside recreation opportunities presented by the existing Public Rights of Way Network.

Appendix 10

Options Appraisal Matrix

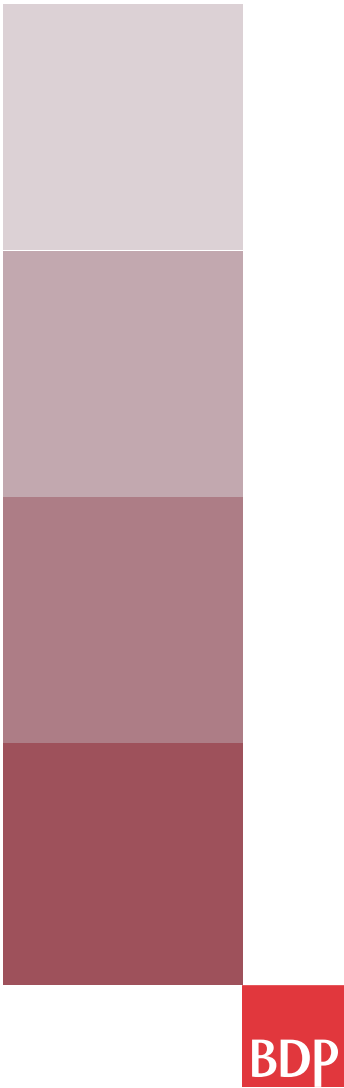| Options / SA Objectives	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
1. To promote community safety	-- This option does not incorporate quality standards for open spaces. This will mean open spaces are more likely to fall into disrepair as there is no set standard to keep to in terms of maintenance and anti crime measures such as good lighting. This means open spaces are likely to be less safe for the community to use.	++ This option will ensure there is a sustainable amount of open space that, while meeting open space needs, will ensure there is sufficient resources to ensure open spaces are of good quality with more high quality sites. Good or high quality open spaces will be better maintained; more frequently used and promote community ownership that will contribute to community safety.	++ This option will bring 60% of open spaces to a good quality standard. Good quality open spaces will be better maintained; more frequently used and promote community ownership that will contribute to community safety. - This option maintains the current level of open space provision. This could be perceived as unsustainable as while it will bring 60% of open spaces to 3* the remaining 40% of open spaces that are below 3* could become very poor quality, underused and potentially unsafe spaces suffering from the effects of anti social behaviour and lack of maintenance due to a lack of resources to maintain them all. This could have negative implications for community safety.
2. To encourage a healthy lifestyle with good accessibility to sport, play and recreation and reduce inequalities in health	-- This option does not include accessibility standards for open spaces except for children's play areas. Consequently inequalities in open space provision are likely to remain in Darlington. This means there will not be equitable access to healthy recreation in Darlington that will not contribute reducing inequalities in health and may exacerbate it.	+ This option sets quality and access standards for all open space types apart from allotments (no quality standards) and green corridors, landscape amenity spaces, cemeteries and civic spaces (no access standards). This should ensure equitable provision of open spaces across the Borough and at the local level in terms of open space quality and type. This will allow people to have adequate access to the types of open space they need to meet their recreational needs that will contribute to reducing health inequalities.	+ This option sets access standards for all open space types apart from for green corridors, landscape amenity spaces, cemeteries and civic spaces. This should ensure equitable provision of open spaces across the Borough and at the local level in terms of open space quality and type. This will allow people to have adequate access to the types of open space they need to meet their recreational needs that will contribute to reducing health inequalities. While this option promotes better overall access than Option 2, Option 2 promotes higher overall quality of open spaces.

Options SA Objectives	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
3. To promote strong and inclusive communities	-- This option includes quantity standards for some types of open spaces that will ensure adequate provision of some types of open spaces across the borough. However this option does not have accessibility standards for open spaces that provide adequate provision at the local level. This option is therefore unlikely to address inequalities in open space provision in Darlington in terms of overall open space provision and the types of open spaces provided. Furthermore this option does not provide measures to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities or small children to ensure they can access open spaces. This option also fails to encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all groups in the community	++ This option will reduce spatial, access and quality inequalities in open space provision and contribute to strong and inclusive communities across the Borough and its sub areas. Conflicts -- This option will dispose of some low value sites that could be perceived at the local level as valuable sites or could be higher value if they were maintained at a higher quality of managed as a different use. This option does not provide measures to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities or small children to ensure they can access open spaces. Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all groups in the community.	+ This option will reduce spatial and access inequalities in open space provision and contribute to strong and inclusive communities across the Borough and its sub areas. Conflicts -- This option maintains the current level of open space provision. This could be perceived as unsustainable as the remaining 40% of open spaces that are below 3* could become very poor quality, underused and potentially unsafe spaces suffering from the effects of anti social behaviour and lack of maintenance due to a lack of resources to maintain them all. This will exclude many groups from using some open spaces due to poor condition. This option does not provide measures to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities or small children to ensure they can access open spaces. Does not encourage community cohesion through better community involvement in open spaces for all groups in the community.

Options SA Objectives	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
4. To promote an increase in trips by walking, cycling and public transport	-- People are more likely to walk or cycle to open spaces if there is high quality open spaces of the type they want to use that are close by. As this option is unlikely to improve quality and accessibility of open spaces it is unlikely that this option will promote an increase in walking and cycling to open spaces. This option does not improve public transport to link more strategic open spaces to residential areas. Therefore people are more likely to use cars to access strategic open spaces and countryside. + This option encourages walking and cycling to open spaces as it encourages the use and extension of the existing network of public rights of way and creation of new recreation routes between open spaces and to open spaces from residential areas.	++ This option will improve the accessibility and quality of open spaces thus people will be more likely to be able to reach the open space they want to use by foot or by cycling. -- While this option improves open spaces and makes them more attractive for visitors it does not improve public transport links between strategic open spaces and residential areas or pedestrian and cycle routes between residential areas and local open spaces. Therefore people are more likely to use cars to access strategic open spaces and countryside.	++ This option will improve the accessibility and quality of open spaces thus people will be more likely to be able to reach the open space they want to use by foot or by walking. While this option promotes better overall access than Option 2, Option 2 promotes higher overall quality of open spaces, hence equal scores are given. -- While this option improves open spaces and makes them more attractive for visitors it does not improve public transport links between strategic open spaces and residential areas or pedestrian and cycle routes between residential areas and local open spaces. Therefore people are more likely to use cars to access strategic open spaces and countryside.
5. To maintain and enhance biodiversity	-- This option does not propose measures to improve biodiversity value of open spaces. Furthermore there are no quality or quantity standards fro natural and semi natural sites that are most likely to have biodiversity value.	++ This option sets quantity and quality standards for natural and semi natural open spaces and proposes two new natural/semi natural open spaces. This will contribute to improving the biodiversity value and number/area of these sites and the Borough as a whole. + This option also proposes quality standards be achieved for all open spaces. Assessment of quality includes biodiversity value as one of the parameters in achieving a high quality site. - Biodiversity is not considered an important indicator of the quality of all types of open	+ This option sets quantity standards for natural and semi natural open spaces and proposes one new natural/semi natural open space. This will contribute to increasing the area/number of sites with biodiversity value. + This option also proposes quality standards be achieved for all open spaces. Assessment of quality includes biodiversity value as one of the parameters in achieving a high quality site. - Biodiversity is not considered an important indicator of the quality of all types of open space so not all open spaces will have

Options / SA Objectives	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
		space so not all open spaces will have improved biodiversity value as a consequence of improved quality.	improved biodiversity value as a consequence of improved quality. - This option will not create more high quality sites so all open spaces with biodiversity value that are not high quality will not become high quality although they may be improved to 3* sites.
6. To promote access to the quality countryside and open spaces	-- This option does not include access or quality standards for open spaces hence it is unlikely to promote access to the country side and open spaces die the better proximity to homes or due to higher quality sites.	+ This option sets accessibility and quality standards for all open spaces types except for allotments (no quality standards) and green corridors, landscape amenity spaces, cemeteries and civic spaces (no access standards). This will promote better access to quality open spaces. ++ This option also includes the development of two more strategic countryside open spaces on the urban fringe (Brampton Lane / Skerningham area). This will increase access to open spaces in the countryside.	++ This option sets accessibility standards for all open spaces types except for green corridors, landscape amenity spaces, cemeteries and civic spaces. This will promote access to quality open spaces. This option scores better than Option 2 as it proposes higher access standards. + This option also includes the development of one large, more strategic countryside open space at an undetermined site. This will increase access to open spaces in the countryside, but to a lesser extent than Option 2 as only one site is proposed rather than two.
7. To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of our rural, urban and cultural landscapes and townscapes and their settings	-- This option does not distinguish between sites that are close to or within conservation areas or contain Schedule Ancient Monuments (SAMs) or listed buildings or village greens from sites that do not, and does not set quality standards to improve the quality of open spaces. Therefore it is unlikely that this option will actively protect and enhance the setting and quality of rural and urban landscapes, townscapes and their	++ This option sets quality standards for open space that will ensure the overall quality of open spaces is maintained and enhanced. Furthermore this option focuses on improving the most valuable open spaces to create more high quality (4* and 5*) open spaces. The presence of conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, village greens and listed buildings in or around an open space will automatically mean an open space is	+ This option focuses on bringing low quality sites to 3* level. The baseline shows there are several sites in conservation areas and with listed buildings that are 2*, therefore this option should actively contribute protection and enhancement of rural and urban landscapes, townscapes and their setting through ensuring higher quality open spaces in conservation areas and around listed buildings. --

Options	Option 1 – Existing Local Plan policy (do nothing)	Option 2 – Proposed Approach	Option 3 – Alternative Approach
SA Objectives			
	setting.	considered high value. Therefore this option should contribute to the active protection and enhancement of rural and urban landscapes, townscapes and their setting. - Open spaces, even if of low value, could play an important role in landscape/townscape setting. Also if low value open spaces are maintained at a higher value quality they could have a higher value in terms of setting. This option will dispose of some open spaces considered low value. Thus there is the potential that some open spaces that contribute to townscape/landscape setting or have the potential to, could be lost.	The majority of open spaces with listed buildings, conservation areas, SAMs and village greens are 3*+. Therefore this option will not enhance the quality of 3* open spaces with listed buildings, conservation areas, SAMs and village greens or enhance and maintain these spaces that are 4* or 5* quality.
Overall Score	1+, 14- (-13)	14+, 6- (+8)	9-, 12+ (+3)

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