Darlington Local Development Framework:

Core Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal Draft Final Report

Darlington Borough Council December 2009

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning and Economic Strategy Manager
Chief Executive's Department (Regeneration)
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Tel: (01325) 388644
Fax: (01325) 388616

Email: planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk
Website: www.darlington.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

1.1.1 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) is the principal document of the Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents which will eventually replace the adopted Darlington Local Plan. The Core Strategy represents the most important document within the LDF, as it sets out the strategic framework for planning policy and future development in the Borough. In particular, the Core Strategy will help to deliver spatially the priorities that are set out in the sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'.

1.1.2 In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Core Strategy DPD has been undertaken. The SA incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) and has been undertaken with regard to guidance produced by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)[1] in 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (2005) and 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' (2005). The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this document as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

1.1.3 This document is the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options. It has been researched and written by Darlington Borough Council's Sustainable Policy and Projects Officer

1.1.4 This report summarises the main outcomes of the SA process, which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive. The SEA requirements are detailed in Table 1.

[1] Now the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Table 1: SEA Requirements for the Sustainability Report of the Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options 2010

SEA Requirements for Sustainability Appraisal Final Report	Location
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Section 1 Section 5 Appendix B
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 4 Appendix C
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 4 Appendix C
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 Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	Section 4 Appendix C
Environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Section 4 Appendix B
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Sections 5 and 6 Appendix E, F, G, H and I
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	Section 6 Appendix F and H
Outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information	Section 3 and 5
Monitoring measures	Section 4 – SA Framework

1.1.5 The Sustainability Appraisal Report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Introduction – Introduces the report and the SA, details the background to the Core Strategy DPD and provides an overview of the Borough of Darlington

Section 2: Sustainability Appraisal Process – Provides an overview of the requirement for SA and SEA, and the SA process adopted by Darlington Borough Council.

Section 3: Appraisal Methodology – Provides an overview of the SA methodology used to complete the appraisal

Section 4: Baseline and Key Sustainability Issues – provides a summary of the baseline conditions and key sustainability issues associated with the Borough of Darlington

Section 5: Appraisal of Core Strategy Objectives and Options – provides detail on the outcomes of the refreshed SA process for the Core Strategy Objectives and Options along with any recommendations arising from the appraisal

Section 6: Appraisal of Core Strategy Preferred Options – provides detail on the outcomes of the SA process for the Core Strategy DPD Revised Preferred Options policies along with any recommendations arising from the appraisal

Section 7: Conclusion

1.2 Background to the Core Strategy Development Plan Document

1.2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) came into force in September 2004 and introduced significant changes to the planning system. The Act introduced the concept of Local Development Frameworks (LDF's) to replace the previous Local Plan system. LDF's consist of a portfolio of local development documents that set out the spatial planning policies for a defined area. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 also set out for the first time the formal requirement that the LDF will need to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development[2].

1.2.2 As part of the requirement to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development the LDF will need to be closely aligned with, and deliver the spatial elements of Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed'.

1.2.3 Darlington Borough Council's Local Development Framework will comprise (figure 1):

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD)
- Accommodating Growth DPD
- Making Places DPD
- Town Centre Fringe Area Action Plan DPD
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Design of New Development SPD
- Planning Obligations SPD
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD
- Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Site Allocations DPD

[2]OPSI, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004

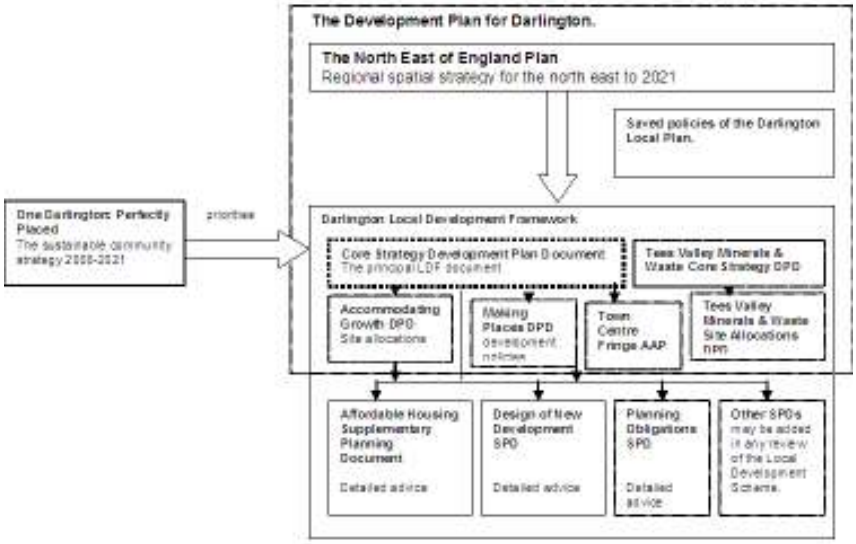

Figure 1: Documents Making up the Darlington LDF and their Relationship with 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' and the Regional Spatial Strategy

1.2.4 As discussed in section 1.1 the Core Strategy represents the most important document within the LDF, as it sets out the strategic framework for planning policy and future development in the Borough. Work commenced on the preparation of the Core Strategy in 2005 when Darlington Borough Council produced the Core Strategy: Issues and Options Report for preliminary community and stakeholder consultation. This report set out the initial policy options for the emerging Core Strategy.

1.2.5 The results of this consultation fed into the preparation of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options 2005 report, which was consulted upon between October-December 2005. A Sustainability Report, setting out the outcomes of the sustainability appraisal of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options 2005 was published for consultation at the same time.

1.2.6 On account of changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy, other significant changes in national policy including new Government statements (particularly on housing and climate change) and changes to other local strategies, Darlington Borough Council took the important decision to comprehensively review and revise the Core Strategy. This subsequently resulted in the production of the Core Strategy: Issues and Options 2008 which were prepared, based on these new and emerging plans and strategies and taking into account the comments made following extensive public and stakeholder involvement for the Core Strategy documents produced in 2005.

1.2.7 The Core Strategy: Issues and Options 2008 were consulted upon in January 2008 and the results of this consultation, along with the recommendations of the sustainability appraisal which was undertaken to assess the sustainability of the Issues and Options fed into the preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options 2008 which was consulted upon in October 2008.

1.2.8 Following consultation responses and the publication of further supporting studies and evidence the Core Strategy Preferred Options 2008 and some of the supporting Issues and Options have been revised. **This Sustainability Appraisal Report is for the Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options 2010.**

1.2.9 Following consultation on the Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options 2010 report the Core Strategy DPD will be submitted to the Secretary of State, along with the representations made during the pre-submission publication stage (Regulation 27). The DPD will then progress to independent examination where the Core Strategy will be assessed to determine if it is sound, before being adopted.

1.2.10 The Core Strategy contains the following summary vision:

'By 2026 Darlington will be a more sustainable community, where a real step change has been achieved in enhancing the quality of life and local environment, and expanding local opportunities for work and for sustainable travel. Those who live in, work in or visit the Borough will enjoy the opportunities and vibrant life of an ambitious city, but within the fabric of a friendly, historic market town with a distinctive atmosphere and against the backcloth of surrounding attractive countryside and villages'

1.3 An Overview of the Borough of Darlington

1.3.1 Darlington Borough is situated in North East England and is one of five unitary authorities which make up the Tees Valley sub-region, along with Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Hartlepool. It is a compact Borough with an area of 75.9 square miles. The market town of Darlington is the main settlement and outside the urban area, there are three main villages of Heighington, Middleton St George/Middleton One Row and Hurworth/Hurworth Place, as well as service villages of Bishopton, Piercebridge, Sadberge and High Consicliffe. The remainder of the area consists of smaller villages, hamlets and open countryside. The River Skerne runs through the urban area, whilst the River Tees runs to the south. North Yorkshire lies to the south of the Borough, the Tees Valley is to the east, the former coalfield areas of County Durham to the north, and rural Teesdale to the west.

1.3.2 The population of Darlington (2009) is approximately 101,000 and is set to increase to 112,500 in 2026. The Borough has a total of 46,000 households with 87% of the population living within the urban centre of the Borough. In terms of demographics, the Borough suffers from an increasingly ageing population with a significantly lower proportion of younger people. Currently 17.3% of the Borough's population is over the age of retirement, whereas only 6.4% of the population are aged under 5 years.

1.3.3 Darlington is ranked as the 95th most deprived area in the country, with 45% of the population living in 10 wards that are amongst the 25% most deprived in the country. Seven wards are amongst the 10% most deprived and 31% of the borough's population live in them. Inequalities largely relate to educational achievement, employment, health and public realm.

1.3.4 Good transport links exist with the A1 (M) crossing the west of the Borough and other key roads and the East Coast Main Line and other railways linking the Borough to the remainder of the North East and Yorkshire. The Durham Tees Valley Airport is in the southern part of the Borough. Darlington town centre is of sub-regional importance for shopping and services, and the town is also an important employment hub

1.3.5 The Borough has a rich and varied natural and historic environment. There are a variety of national, regional and local environmental and historic designations in the Borough.

Darlington also has a high level of open space for a Borough of its size. Provision is generally good although there is a deficiency in quality and quantity in some areas.

2. Sustainability Appraisal Process

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Darlington Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents. SA is a process through which the 'sustainability' of a plan under preparation is assessed. The SA provides a qualitative assessment of the environmental, social and economic performance of the plan against a set of sustainability objectives. For potentially negative effects identified, measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate such effects are recommended. Similarly, opportunities for improvements in the contribution towards sustainability are identified. The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of the plan, so that decisions can be made that accord with the objectives of sustainable development.

2.1.2 In March 2005, a new Government strategy for sustainable development was set out called Securing the Future[3]. The following definition for sustainable development was forwarded:

"The goal of sustainable development is 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."

To achieve this goal five key principles have been proposed;

- Living Within Environmental Limits
- Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society
- Achieving a Sustainable Economy
- Promoting Good Governance
- Using Sound Science Responsibly

These principles of sustainable development are at the heart of the SA process

2.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by European and by English law. It involves the systematic identification and evaluation of the environmental impacts of a strategic action (e.g. a plan or programme). In 2001, the EU legislated for SEA with the adoption of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') [4]. The aim of the SEA Directive is:

[3]ODPM, Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)
[4]European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

"… to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment." (2001/42/EC)

2.2.2 The Directive was transposed into English legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'), which came into force on 21st July 2004. The SEA Regulations apply (with some specific exceptions) to plans and programmes subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority or those prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure.

2.2.3 SA extends the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social concerns. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to undertake SA for each of their Local Development Documents (LDD's), including the Core Strategy. SA is, therefore, a statutory requirement for LDF's along with SEA.

2.2.4 The Government's approach is to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into a wider SA process that considers economic and social, as well as environmental effects. To this end, in November 2005, the Government published guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive ('the Guidance'). The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this document as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

2.2.5 All LDF documents should also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the Habitats Directive, in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. HRA is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project or plan on one of more sites of European nature conservation importance. Darlington Borough Council must ascertain that the LDF will not adversely effect the integrity of a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) before the LDF can be adopted. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents is reported on separately.

2.3 SA Process

2.3.1 The SA process is outlined by government guidance and is shown in Figure 2. This report represents stage C of the process. The key stages of the SA of the Core Strategy DPD is illustrated in Figure 3 and is described in more detail in Section 3.

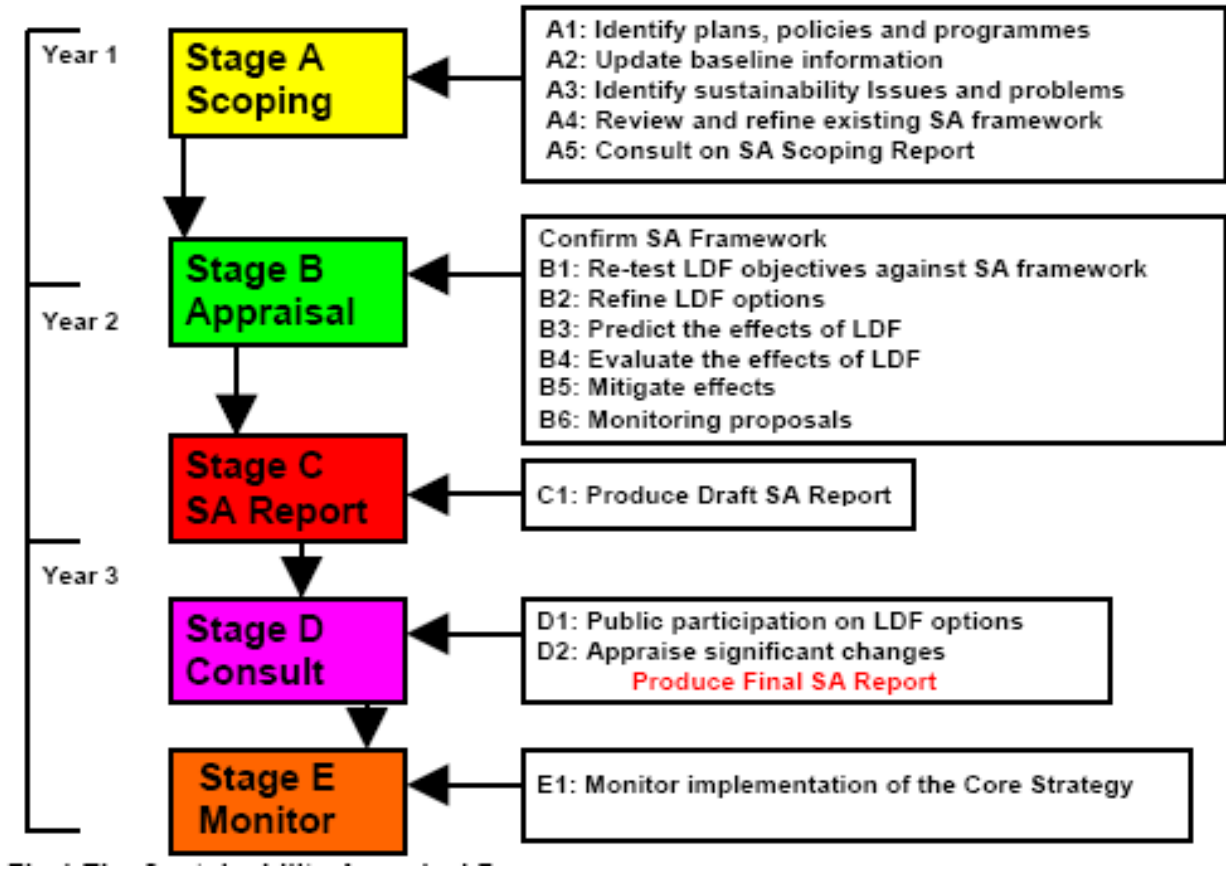

Figure 2: The Sustainability Appraisal Process

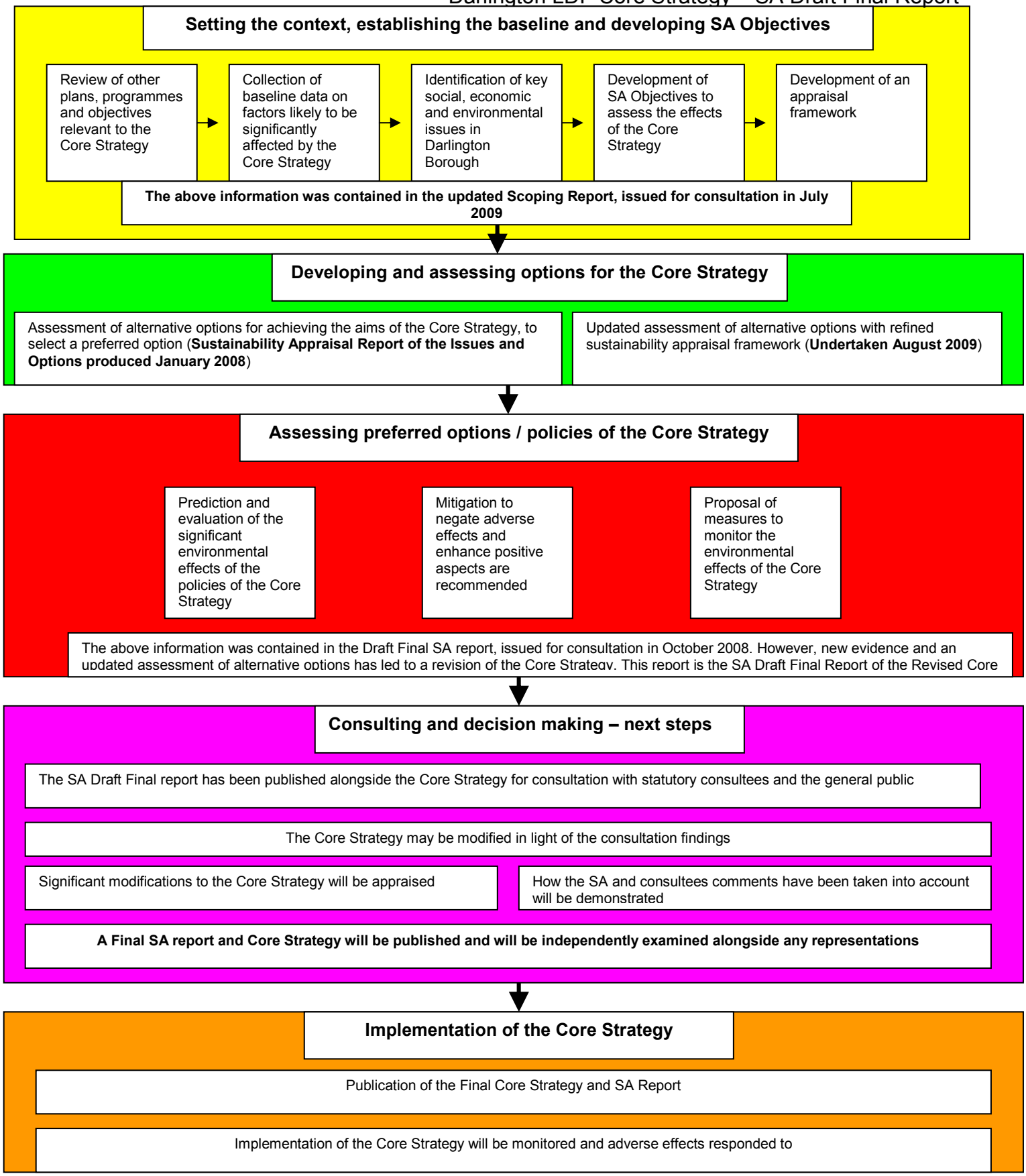

Figure 3: SA of the Core Strategy DPD

3. Appraisal Methodology

3.1 Stage A (Scoping)

3.1.1 The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) was scoping (Stage A). As detailed in Figure 3, this stage involved setting the Context of the SA, establishing the baseline position and developing SA objectives. In light of consultation responses and advice received throughout the development of the Core Strategy, a decision was made to refresh the Scoping stage. This decision was taken to ensure that the sustainability issues and problems identified for Darlington Borough are up to date and that the sustainability appraisal framework is fit for purpose. The scoping stage for the Core Strategy DPD was undertaken between February and August 2009. The following sections summarise the outcomes.

3.2 SA Workshop

3.2.1 In order to inform the scoping stage, a workshop was held in June 2009 with stakeholders from social, economic and environmental sectors. Within the workshop stakeholders were given the opportunity to:

- Provide and verify baseline data
- Verify the sustainability issues identified and indicate how they would like the LDF to address them and;
- Develop the Sustainability Objectives

A list of stakeholders who attended the workshop is included in **Appendix A**.

3.3 Context Review

3.3.1 One of the first tasks of the SA (Stage A) involved a review of other plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) relevant to the Core Strategy DPD. The purpose of reviewing PPPs as part of the SA was to ensure that relationships between these other documents were fully explored and to ensure that the relevant environmental, social and economic objectives were taken on board throughout the SA. The table contained within **Appendix B** provides a detailed list of the PPPs reviewed including the implications identified for the Core Strategy and the SA process. A list of the PPP's reviewed is detailed in Table 2. The key messages from the context review are summarised in section 4.

Table 2: Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

Plans Policies and Programmes	Year
International and European Community	
World Summit on Sustainable Development	2002
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992
The Kyoto Protocol	2005
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)	1989
EU Council Directive 01/42EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive	2001
EU Council Directive 08/50/EC Air Quality Directive	2008
EU Council Directive 00/60/EC Water Framework Directive	2000
EU Council Directive 80/68/EC Groundwater Directive	1980
EU Council Directive 06/118/EC Groundwater Daughter Directive	2006
EU Council Directive 07/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risk	2007

EU Council Directive 02/49/EC Environmental Noise Directive	2002
EU Council Directive 92/42/EC Habitats Directive	1992
EU Council Directive 97/49/EC Birds Directive	1997
EU Council Directive 99/31/EC Landfill Directive	1999
A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development	2001
Soil Thematic Strategy	2006
Lisbon Strategy: Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge	2000
European strategy and co-operation in education and training	2007
EU Lifelong Learning Programme	
White Paper: European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide	2001
Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe - World Health Organisation	2005
European Union Sports Charter	2001
Mental Health Action Plan for Europe: World Health Organisation	2005
The Maastricht Treaty (Treaty of the European Union)	1993
The European Landscape Convention	2000
European Spatial Development Perspective	1999
National	
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act	1979
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)	1981
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act	1990
Environmental Protection Act	1990
Countryside and Rights of Way Act	2000
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Working Together for Clean Air)	2000
The Urban White Paper (Our Towns & Cities: The Future)	2000
The Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: The Future)	2000
A Sporting Future for All	2000
National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision	2001
National Service Framework for Older People (Department of Health)	2001
The Government statement The Historic Environment: A Force for our future	2001
Working with the Grain of Nature: A biodiversity strategy for England	2002
Making It Happen	2002
Green Space, Better Places: Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force	2002
The Water Act	2003
The Future of Transport: A Network for 2030	2004
Safer Places: The Planning System & Crime Prevention	2004
Every Child Matters: Change for Children	2004
School Sites and Community Sports Provision: Sport England	2004
Choosing Health, Making Healthier Choices Easier	2004
The Housing Act	2004
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act	2004
Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy	2005
Making Space for Water: Taking forward a new Government Strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England	2005
White Paper: Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work	2005
Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation	2005
Sustainable Communities: Homes for All	2005
Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A guide to Good Practice	2006
Climate Change: The UK Programme	2006
Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change	2006
CLG: Code for Sustainable Homes	2006
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change	2006
Good Practice Guidance on Planning for Tourism	2006
The Future of Air Transport (2003) and the Future of Air Transport Progress Report	2006
Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper	2006
Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener	2006
Time for Play: Encouraging Greater Play Opportunities for Children and Young People	2006
A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation	2006
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing	2006
Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper	2006
The Pitt Review – Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods	2007
Conserving Biodiversity in a Changing Climate: Guidance on Building Capacity to Adapt	2007
Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper	2007
Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy	2007
Building a Greener Future: policy statement	2007
Waste Strategy for England	2007
(DCSF) The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures	2007
English Indices of Deprivation	2007
Active Design: Sport England	2007
White Paper Heritage Protection for the 21st Century	2007
Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable	2007
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Identifying appropriate land for housing development	2007
Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper	2007
State of the Natural Environment	2008
UKCIP08 Climate Change Projections	2008

Development and Flood Risk: A practice Guide Companion to PPS25	2008
Climate Change Act	2008
Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England	2008
Strategy for Sustainable Construction	2008
Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives. A cross-Government strategy for England	2008
All Landscapes Matter, A Draft Policy for Consultation	2008
Draft Flood and Water Management Bill	2009
The Government Response to the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing	2009
Be Active, Be Healthy, A plan for getting the nation moving	2009
Building a Sense of Local Belonging	2009
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development	2005
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (Supplement to PPS 1)	2006
Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for town centres	2005
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	2004
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	2005
Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management	2005
Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies	2005
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning	2008
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy	2004
Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control	2004
Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk	2006
Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms	1992
Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications	2001
Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport	2001
Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment	1994
Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning	1999
Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	1991
Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise	1992
Minerals Planning Statement 1: Planning and Minerals	2006
Minerals Planning Statement 1: Planning and Minerals, Annex 3 Natural building and roofing stone provision	2006
Regional	
A Biodiversity Audit of the North East	2001
The North East Rural Action Plan	2002
Sustainable Communities in the North East: Building for the Future	2003
Moving Forward: The Northern Way Growth Strategy	2004
State of the Environment Report for the North East	2004
North East Renewable Energy Strategy	2005
Regional Cultural Strategy for the North East of England	2005
Leading the Way: Regional Economic Strategy	2006
North East England Regional Housing Strategy: Quality Places for a Dynamic Region	2007
Integrated Regional Framework for the North East	2008
The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021	2008
North East England Climate Change Adaptation Study	2008
North East Strategy for the Environment	2008
Better Health, Fairer Health: NHS	2008
NE Regional Facilities Strategy	2008
Countryside Character Volume 1: North East	
Sub-regional	
	1994
Natural England Tees Lowlands Landscape Character Assessment	2003
Tees Valley Tourism Strategy	2003
Tees Valley Cultural Strategy	2006
The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy	2006
Environment Agency: The Wear Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy	2006
Tees Valley City Region Business Case and City Region Development Programme	2007
Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	2007
County Durham Biodiversity Action Plan	2007
Tees Valley Sub Regional Housing Strategy	2008
Environment Agency: The Tees Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy	2008
Environment Agency: Draft River Basin Management Plan, Northumbria River Basin District	2008
Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy	2008
Consultation on Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy	2008
Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents for the Tees Valley	2008
Tees Valley City Region Multi Area Agreement	2008
Tees Valley Housing Growth Point	2008
Tees Valley Sport Sub Regional Facilities Strategy	2009
Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment	2009
Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Assessment	2009
Local	

The Borough of Darlington Local Plan	1997
Adding to Quality : A Development Strategy for Darlington Town Centre	2001
Darlington Contaminated Land Strategy	2003
Moving Up – Darlington Cultural Strategy	2003
Gateway to Economic Quality: Darlington Economic Regeneration Strategy	2004
Darlington Urban Capacity Study	2004
All Together Now: A Social Inclusion Strategy for Darlington	2005
Darlington (PCT) Improving Health and Wellbeing Strategy	2005
Darlington Local Housing Assessment	2005
Darlington's Climate Change Strategy	2006
Darlington Gateway Strategy	2006
Darlington's Transport Strategy	2006
Darlington, A Town on the Move: Second Local Transport Plan	2006
Darlington Borough Council Homelessness Strategy	2006
Darlington Open Space Strategy	2007
Darlington Play and Free Time Strategy	2007
Older Persons' Housing Strategy	2007
Sustainable Community Strategy - One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	2008
Darlington Borough Council – Corporate Plan	2008
Darlington Retail Study	2008
Darlington Children and Young People's Plan	2008
Darlington Primary Capital Programme	2008
Community Safety Plan	2008
All our Futures, A Strategy for Later Life in Darlington	2008
Darlington Housing Strategy	2008
Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy	2008
Darlington's Local Area Agreement	2008
Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy	2009
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	2009

Source: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Darlington Borough Council, August 2009)

3.4 Baseline

3.4.1 During Stage A, baseline data was gathered from a review of the PPP's and from a range of social, economic and environmental data sources. As discussed in section 3.2, stakeholders also helped to provide and verify baseline data. The baseline data set out current conditions within the Borough and provided a way of identifying the sustainability issues that are affecting the Borough. It also helped to identify any sustainability issues, problems and opportunities that the Core Strategy could address.

3.4.2 The baseline conditions provided the basis against which significant effects of the Core Strategy DPD were predicted. Detailed baseline information collated during Stage A is provided in the Scoping Report and within **Appendix C** of this Sustainability Appraisal Report. The findings of the baseline assessment is summarised in section 4 of this report.

3.4.3 Minor difficulties arose in the collection of some types of baseline data. In April 2008, t the Government introduced The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships. The framework introduced a single set of National Indicators (NI's) to replace previously collated Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's). As the emphasis of some NI's differ to previous BVPI's (for example BVPI 84 waste collected kg/head has been replaced with NI 191 residual household waste per household kg), it was difficult to identify the most up to date trends, as the data was not comparable.

3.4.4 Limitations also arose in terms of ascertaining trends in relation to the priority species and habitats at the Borough level, as this information has only been produced at the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) level. Furthermore, it was not possible to

obtain some data types (such as data on Darlington Borough's installed renewable energy and its capacity) as this information had not been collected before.

3.5 Key Sustainability Issues

3.5.1 An analysis of the baseline data, trends presented and stakeholder input enabled the identification of up to date sustainability issues and problems in Darlington Borough. This provided an opportunity to define key issues for the Core Strategy. The key sustainability issues are documented in section 4 of this report.

3.6 Developing the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

3.6.1 The sustainability issues that were identified were verified at the SA workshop and a draft range of objectives were prepared for the workshop stakeholders to choose between and amend as necessary. Reviews of sub-regional and local documents, plans and programs were then used to 'fine-tune' each objective, paying particular attention to the key sustainability issues. The SA objectives specify a desired direction for change and were used to appraise the social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy DPD. The objectives are a key component of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

3.6.2 Figure 4 shows the process followed in the development of the sustainability objectives. The link to the earlier Stage A1-A3 tasks and the sustainability workshop is shown. This process is fully tabulated in **Appendix D** to show how the objectives were formulated and how they have been shaped through the consultation process.

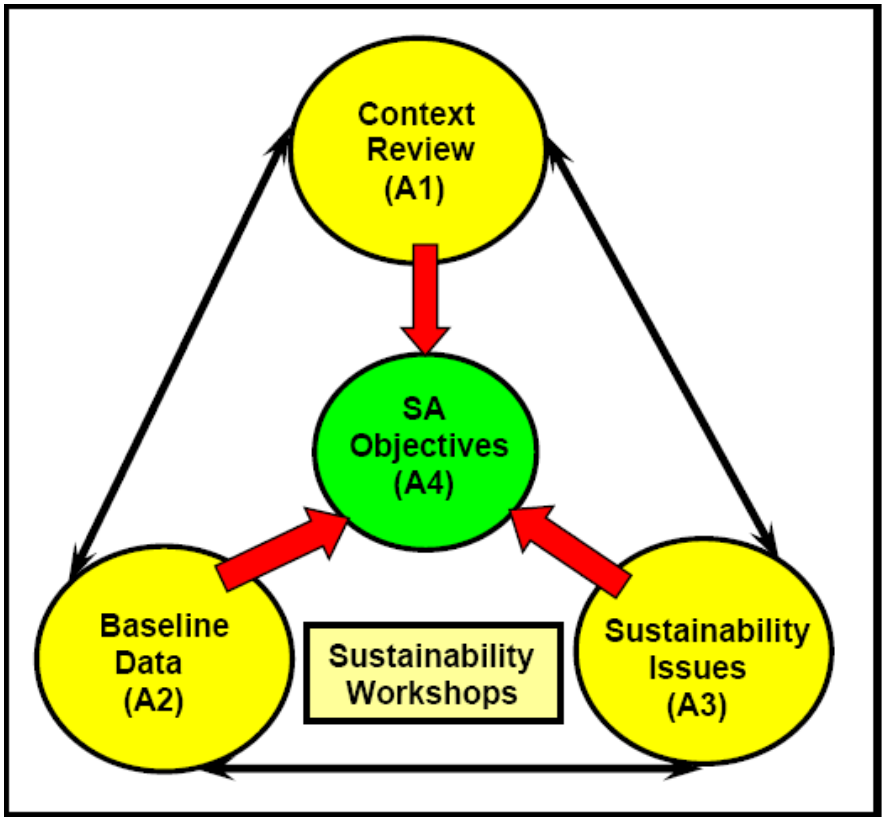

Figure 4: Sustainability Objectives Process

3.6.3 The conclusion of Task A4 requires that the draft sustainability objectives are appraised or tested for compatibility against one another. The compatibility testing of the objectives is detailed within section 4 of this report. It must be recognised that a basic test of this nature inevitably involves assumptions being made.

3.7 Developing the Appraisal Framework

3.7.1 Following from the formulation of objectives, a Sustainability Appraisal Framework was created. The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. It is central to the SA process and consists of the SA objectives, more detailed decision making criteria and indicators that could be used to monitor the implementation of the Core Strategy DPD. The SA Framework is detailed within Section 4 of this report.

3.8 The Scoping Report

3.8.1 The output of this stage (Stage A) was an updated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which was issued to the statutory consultation bodies (i.e. Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency), and other key stakeholders in July 2009. The Scoping report was also published on the Borough's website and was distributed to local libraries. This provided the opportunity for a range of organisations to comment on the proposed SA framework for use in appraising the Core Strategy DPD. Comments received were recorded and have been accounted for in the SA process. Following consultation the Scoping Report was published in August 2009.

3.9 Stages B (Appraisal)

3.9.1 The second stage (Stage B) of the SA of the Core Strategy DPD involved an appraisal of the Core Strategy DPD objectives, strategic options and preferred options/policies. In order to score the objectives, strategic options and preferred options/policies against the SA framework, a scoring system was devised. A guide to the scoring system is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sustainability Appraisal Scoring System

Effect on the Sustainability Objective	Symbol
Likely to have a very positive effect	✓✓
Likely to have a positive effect	✓
Minor effect or no clear link	**0**
Uncertain or insufficient information to determine effect	**?**
Likely to have a negative impact	✕
Likely to have a very negative impact	✕✕
Could have both positive and negative effects depending on implementation	✓/✕

3.10 Appraisal of the Core Strategy Objectives

3.10.1 To ensure that the sustainability of the Core Strategy is achieved, the objectives of the Core Strategy must accord with the principles of the SA objectives set out in Section 4 of this report. To achieve this, the Core Strategy Objectives were tested to

determine their compatibility with the SA objectives. In order to test the objectives' compatibility, an appraisal matrix was produced which can be viewed in **Appendix E**. A summary of the findings of the appraisal of the Core Strategy objectives and the changes made as a result are detailed in section 5 of this report.

3.11 Appraisal of the Core Strategy Options

3.11.1 As mentioned in section 1, a Core Strategy Issues and Options Report was produced in January 2008. This was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report which highlighted the most sustainable options to take forward to be developed as Preferred Options.

3.11.2 However, the SA Framework, developed in the refreshed scoping stage, replaced the previous framework that had been used to appraise the 2008 Issues and Options. As a result, it was necessary to refresh the appraisal of the options against the new framework. It was also necessary to appraise new options that emerged since 2008 as a result of new studies and evidence. The re-appraisal was undertaken to ensure that the options that best address Darlington's current sustainable issues were highlighted to those responsible for revising the Preferred Options.

3.11.3 In the process of appraising the options against the SA framework, the following factors were considered:

- Are the options likely to have any adverse effects?
- Can these be prevented, reduced or offset?
- Can positive effects be enhanced?
- Who are likely to be the 'winners and losers' for each option?
- Are the effects likely to be variable over the short, medium and long term?

3.11.4 The full appraisal of the Options and a summary of cumulative effects is detailed in **Appendices F and G**. A summary of the options considered and how the appraisal of the options has fed into the revision of the Preferred Options is detailed in section 5.

3.12 Appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options

3.12.1 To facilitate delivery of the preferred options for the Core Strategy DPD, a framework of policies to steer spatial planning in Darlington was developed. The policies are provided in full in the Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options 2010 Report.

3.12.2 The policies detailed in the report were appraised using the SA framework devised in the refreshed scoping stage. The full appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options and cumulative effects is detailed in **Appendix H and I**. The significant social, environmental and economic effects of the Preferred Options and associated mitigation measures are detailed in section 6.

4. Overview of Stage A (Scoping)

4.1 Core Strategy: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

4.1.1 Following consultation, the refreshed Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was published in August 2009. This report documents in detail the findings of Stage A and should be referred to along with the accompanying appendices as a companion document to this report. However, for ease of reference the key findings from Stage A are summarised within this section.

4.2 A1 Context Review: Key Principles

4.2.1 Following the review of the Plans Policies and Programmes documented in Table 2, the following key principles were identified. These principles were taken into account in the development of the Core Strategy and the SA process:

- Contribute towards the creation and enabling of a sustainable Borough by addressing unsustainable consumption and production patterns; protect natural resources; tackle climate change and spatially address social inequalities

- Reduce Darlington's contribution to climate change by reducing the energy demand of development, increase energy efficiency and use of renewable technology and reduce the need to travel to new development.

- Improve Darlington's resilience and ability to adapt to Climate Change by reducing flood risk and its impacts on people and property and by ensuring that development is steered away from areas at risk where possible

- Protect and improve Darlington's resources by ensuring the sustainable and efficient use of water (ground and surface), land and air

- Adopt the hierarchical principle of waste and mineral reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery

- Ensure that current water, sewerage, waste, mineral and transport infrastructure and its capacity is taken into account

- Protect, maintain and provide opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity/geodiversity including designated and non-designated habitats and species

- Reduce pressures on the natural environment and build capacity for biodiversity to adapt to climate change, for example, through the protection and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure

- Promote sustainable economic development and focus regeneration in neglected areas

- Improve access to a diverse range of sustainable employment opportunities

- Protect the viability and attractiveness of the town centre

- Improve access for all to a diverse range of educational opportunities
- Encourage cultural and arts developments in accessible locations appropriate to their catchment
- Reduce the need to travel, locate development close to existing public transport networks and encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that LDF policies are produced with community and stakeholder involvement
- Provide good quality, accessible community services close to need. In particular, support rural communities and the services they depend on to enhance their local sustainability
- Create safer, secure and more cohesive and inclusive communities
- Provide decent, well designed and affordable homes
- Deliver the RSS housing allocation and meet identified needs across a range of housing types and tenures
- Improve health and wellbeing by improving the quality of and access to open space, sports, play and community facilities
- Protect and enhance nationally and locally valued heritage, cultural assets and landscapes
- Ensure that the design of all new developments are environmentally sustainable and reflect and enhance the character of Darlington Borough.

4.3 A2 Core Strategy Baseline Overview

4.3.1 Following the review of the Plans Policies and Programmes, it was then necessary to collate baseline information to find out how Darlington Borough is performing against the key principles, and if performance is improving or getting worse. Baseline information is summarised in Table 4 in relation to the social, environmental and economic characteristics of Darlington Borough.

Table 4: Baseline Information

Topic	Relevant Core Strategy Theme	Baseline Situation
Environment		
Ecological Footprint	Achieving a more sustainable community	The EF of the UK is 5.4 gha/capita and is three times greater than the sustainable living budget. This means that if everyone lived as the UK population do we would need three planets to sustain life. The EF for the North East is 5.19 gha/capita and the Tees Valley EF is 5.12 gha/capita. Darlington's EF is currently 5.23 gha/capita[6] which although is less than the UK's EF is greater than the EF for the North East and for the Tees Valley.

Climate change and Energy	Achieving a more sustainable community	CO_2 emissions have increased in both the industrial and commercial and domestic sector between 2005 and 2006. The Road tra sector and Land use change sectors have decreased their CO_2 emissions most notably in the Road transport sector.
Air Quality	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Air quality monitoring demonstrates compliance with national air quality objectives and hence the Council has not needed to designate any Air Quality Management Areas
Land	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	The Council has identified approximately 1280 potentially contaminated sites. Sites are being remediated on an ongoing basis through the planning system and Part 2A Contaminated Land regime. Darlington Borough has a fairly substantial number of potentially contaminated sites due to its industrial past.
Water	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Biological river quality is below the national average at 52% of river length assessed as having 'good' biological status as opposed to the national average of 54.2%[15]. Under the new Water Framework Directive Assessment all rivers and tributaries have been awarded a moderate ecological potential and all those that have been assessed currently fail the Water Framework Assessment in terms of chemical quality[16]. The quantitative and chemical status of Darlington's groundwater is also poor and an increasing trend in rising nitrates in the catchment area has been identified.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington Borough contains 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) including: • Neasham Fen – designated as a Geological SSSI – Favourable condition • Hell Kettles • Newton Ketton meadows • Redcar Field All sites are in a favourable or recovering condition. A total of 8.29 hectares of Darlington Borough is designated as a SSSI Darlington also has 8 Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) and 3 community woodlands amounting to a total of 64 hectares. However, Darlington falls short of the Natural England target of 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 of the population
Waste and Minerals	Achieving a more sustainable community	Total waste produced in the Borough is decreasing. However, overall waste collected per head of the population has increased slightly over a five year period as depicted by the trendline. The amount of waste collected per head of the population was 506 kg/head in 2006/07 which was 65kg above the national average of 441kg per head. Recycling rates of household waste are low but improving. Darlington's recycling rate has increased over the period 2006 to 2009 from 22.71% to 25.83%. An increase of 3.12% overall. Reuse and recycling contributes

		17.54% to the 2008/09 recycling rate and composting contributes 8.29%. Although recycling rates are improving Darlington will need to improve significantly to achieve the Government's recycling rate target of 40% by 2010. In terms of minerals, no quarrying activities are undertaken within the Borough. However, efforts should still be made to safeguard resources.
Transport and Accessibility	Efficient and Effective Transport Infrastructure	In terms of travel patterns within the Borough a higher % of Darlington's population use a car to get to work than the national average. The main mode of transport for getting to work is also the car Darlington is a compact Borough and it is not just jobs that are accessible as National Indicator data shows that 94% of the population are also able to access services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling
Heritage	Achieving a More Sustainable Community A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Overall, there are 8 Grade I, 31 Grade II* and 478 Grade II listed buildings in the borough. Of these listings 1 Grade I, 5 Grade II* and 18 Grade II buildings are on the Buildings at Risk Register. The condition of the buildings at risk are predominantly classified as in a vulnerable condition (42%) as opposed to at extreme risk (23%). Only 5 heritage assets at risk are currently undergoing restoration. However, the overall number of granted applications for listed building consent has increased by 19% over the period 2005/09. There are also numerous historic but unlisted buildings at risk. There are 598 sites of local and regional significance on the Sites and Monuments Register and 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM's). Darlington has the second highest nun SAM's in the Tees Valley although the density is below the North East average. 2 SAM's are at risk and a recent audit shows that improvements are needed in particular to the accessibility (where feasible) and provision of interpretation at scheduled monuments. Darlington Borough has 17 conservation areas in total, 9 of which have character appraisals. 1 conservation area is classified as being at risk A further threat to Darlington's heritage and historic environment is climate change
Landscape/ Local Environmental Quality	Achieving a More Sustainable Community A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner	Landscape threats to the Tees Lowlands include: • Hedgerow removal and the loss of meadows and pasture through agricultural

	Environment	Intensification • Recreational development near to urban areas e.g. golf courses Darlington has a high level of open space for a Borough of its size with a total of 923ha. 859ha of which is in the main urban area and is within a 300 metre walk for 99% of the population. Open space within the Borough contributes positively to landscape character, the wider green infrastructure network and provides opportunities for recreation. The majority (72%) of open space within Darlington i high value but several issues have been identifi • Poor provision in some parts of the Borough (Largely the West end of the town) • Marked differences in the quality of open sp depending on where residents live • Geographical gaps in the provision of speci types of open space • Evolving open space needs of an ageing population • Need for protection and enhancement of op spaces within villages The local environmental quality of the Borough is good. The Cleanliness NI195 data reports that unacceptable levels of litter, detritus, and graffiti are below the national average at 8% (litter), 9% (detritus) and 0% (graffiti). However, levels of flyposting have increased and are above the national average by 1%
Economy and Employment		
Employment	Prosperous Darlington	The public sector (public administration, education and health) is the largest employer in Darlington followed by Distribution, hotels and restaurants. Employment in Manufacturing has declined and there is a low level of employment from high wage sectors compared to the national average 60.6% of the population are economically active and this has increased slightly (despite an ageing population) over the period 2004/08. However, this is below the national average and the employment rate has declined overall by 3%. In line with the decline in the employment rate the % of the population claiming Job Seeker's allowance (JSA) has increased by 1.6% over the period 2006/09. This rate of increase is in line with regional figures but is above national averages. It is anticipated that the % of the population claiming JSA will increase during the current economic downturn. Despite a decrease in the employment rate and increase in JSA claimants, average earnings

		have increased by £60.40 per week between 2006 and 2009. Darlington's earnings are above the regional average but significantly fall short of the national average by £40.40 per week.
Economy	Prosperous Darlington A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	The number of VAT registered businesses indicates the pattern of overall economic well being and the level of entrepreneurship in an area. On the basis of VAT registered activity, total activity increased by 210 registrations (9.5%) over the period 2004/07. This % increase is in line with regional figures and exceeds national figures. In terms of the availability of employment land the Darlington Gateway Strategy has been successful in tackling the lack of sites and premises to meet the needs of potential employers. Gateway has attracted £420 million of private sector investment into the borough to date resulting directly in the creation of over 2000 jobs. This is evidenced by the amount of land available for development which has increased by 421.33ha over the period 2004/08 The town centre has also been improved as an important strand of the Gateway strategy. As a result the Pedestrian Heart of the town centre has now been completed. However, the improvements the town centre and town centre fringe has more vacant floorspace than out of town shopping centres.
Social		
Population	Quality Housing for All A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Darlington's age profile indicates an increasing population, with particular increases in those aged 75-85+ An increase of 4,200 residents aged 75-85+ is forecast between 2009 (8,300) and 2026 (12,500). The overall population (all ages) is set to increase by 11,500, from 101,000 in 2009 to 112,500 in 2026
Deprivation	Prosperous Darlington A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services Quality Housing for All A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Darlington is ranked as the 95th most deprived the country, with 45% of the population living in wards that amongst the 25% most deprived in the country. Seven wards are amongst the 10% most deprived and 31% of the borough's population live in them. Inequalities largely relate to educational achievement, employment health and public realm
Community engagement	All themes	80% of the population believe that people of different backgrounds get on well together in Darlington which is a good indicator of social cohesiveness and integration. However, the percentage of people who feel that they can influence decision in their locality is low at 29.7%. This may impact on community involvement and participation in the Borough

Crime and Safety	All themes	Crime in the Borough has decreased by nearly a quarter (22.6%) over the period 2005/09 and ha consistently decreased in all wards within the Borough with the exception of one rural and three urban wards in the period 2006/09 which have shown a slight increase[45]. Overall however, the Borough's crime rate (59.2%) is slightly above national (54%) and regional averages (52.9%) as of 2007/08 The percentage of residents who feel safe whilst outside at night has improved by 10.4% in the period 2002/09[47]. However, more recently there has been a slight decline of 1.7% between 2007/09. The percentage of residents who feel safe whilst outside during the day has improved by 5.9% in the period 2002/09. The % has also increased slightly between 07/08 and 08/09.
Education and Skills	Achieving a More Sustainable Community Prosperous Darlington	There are 10 nurseries, 3 Infant and junior schools, 24 primary schools, 7 secondary schools, 3 independent schools and 2 colleges within the Borough. Despite the range and number of educational establishments demand f state school education outstripped supply in 200 There is an increasing level of school educational achievement with 47% of 16yr olds achieving 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English. However, this rate is below the national average of 49.1% in 2007/08 Despite an increase in educational achievement there has been an increase in the % of 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment. The current rate (6.9%) is slightly above the national average of 6.7% The % of working age population without qualifications is decreasing and performance is currently better than the regional and national average. However, despite a qualified population employers have reported a greater skills gap than the regional and national average
Culture	Prosperous Darlington A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Participation in cultural activities for example, visits to museums, engagement in arts, film etc is important for social wellbeing, education and enhancing community identity. Currently less than half of the population (49.7%) take part in cultural activities
Housing	Achieving a More Sustainable Community Prosperous Darlington Quality Housing For All	The percentage of owner occupied (76%) housing in Darlington is higher than the North East and English averages and the average household size in 2001 was 2.27, below national average of 2.36 Most older people want to remain in their home but there is interest in sheltered

		accommodation and buying an apartment in a specific older persons development, as well as s demand for bungalows development in the planning pipeline comprises a high proportion of one and two bed apartments, whereas higher income in-migrants want to owner occupy three or more bedroom detached houses. The RSS has indicated that 3550 new homes should be built in Darlington between 20 and 2021. However, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies a total shortfall of 804 dwellings against this requirement[75] Darlington borough suffers from a shortfall of affordable housing. This is particularly an issue in rural parts of the Borough and the North and Central parts of the town
Health and Recreation	A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Male and female life expectancy is increasing but is below the regional and national averages[48] There is a reported 13 year difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards There has been an increase in number of smokers quitting but this figure is below the national average There has been a decrease in obesity amongst primary school children but this is still significant above the national figures Binge drinking in Darlington is significantly above the national average There has been an increase in diabetes which is above national averages There has been an increase in teenage pregnan (under 18). Current figures are significantly above the national average Adult participation in sport is low, just over a quarter (26.6%) currently participate in sport and active recreation Darlington currently has a good provision of swimming pools, indoor bowls, athletic track lanes, golf courses, gyms and sports and community halls. However, Darlington has a low provision of synthetic turf pitches, specialist indoor facilities, multi use games areas, tennis courts and specialist outdoor facilities. There is also an identified shortfall of junior playing pitches in the Borough

4.4 A3 Key Sustainability Issues and Problems

4.4.1 Following the review of relevant plans, policies and programmes and an analysis of the baseline information, it was possible to identify the following sustainability issues and problems for Darlington Borough. These are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Sustainability Issues and Problems

Topic	Relevant Core Strategy Theme	Issues and Problems
Environment		
Ecological Footprint	Achieving a more sustainable community	Darlington's residents currently consume an unsustainable proportion of the earth's resources. Darlington's Ecological Footprint needs to be reduced in order to meet the sustainable living budget of 1.8 gha/capita
Climate change and Energy	Achieving a more sustainable community	CO_2 emissions in Darlington are increasing particularly through Industrial and Commercial and Domestic activities. Energy consumption from non-renewable sources is greater overall than regional averages and a higher proportion of residents live in fuel poverty. Flood risk and climatic extremes are likely to increase and will impact on social, economic and environmental factors within the Borough
Air Quality	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington's air quality complies with national objectives and emissions of major air pollutants are below action levels
Land	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington has a significant number of potentially contaminated land sites
Water	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Ecological and chemical water quality is generally poor The quantitative status of groundwater is under pressure and the Magnesian Limestone Aquifer is particularly sensitive to pollution.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington's nationally designated SSSI's are in a favourable or recovering condition and Darlington has a good range of Local Nature Reserves. However, it is nationally recognised that biodiversity is under pressure from human development and climate change.
Waste and Minerals	Achieving a more sustainable community	The amount of waste reused, recycled and composted in the Borough is low
Transport and Accessibility	Efficient and Effective Transport Infrastructure	Despite the relative accessibility of workplaces, services and facilities in the Borough, Darlington's main mode of transport is the car
Heritage	Achieving a More Sustainable Community A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington's heritage and historic environment requires adequate protection and promotion through LDF policies. Darlington's local landscape and historic character requires protection from

		inappropriate and cumulative development
Landscape/ Local Environmental Quality	Achieving a More Sustainable Community A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Darlington's local landscape and historic character requires protection from inappropriate and cumulative development Disparities in the quality of public realm and open space exist
Economy and Employment		
Employment	Prosperous Darlington	The unemployment rate is increasing and there is a low level of employment within high wage sectors. Coupled with this is the fact that there are inequalities in earnings and employment across the Borough and the population is ageing. This is likely to decrease the proportion of the population that are economically active in time
Economy	Prosperous Darlington A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	The vitality and viability of the town centre will require protection in order to compete effectively with other shopping experiences
Social		
Population	Quality Housing for All A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Darlington's population is ageing and the retention of young people in the Borough is a growing concern**.**
Deprivation	Prosperous Darlington A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services Quality Housing for All A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Significant inequalities exist between the most deprived and least deprived wards
Community engagement	All themes	The majority of residents (70%) do not feel able to influence decisions
Crime and Safety	All themes	Total crime is decreasing in the Borough but the overall crime rate is higher then regional and national averages
Education and Skills	Achieving a More Sustainable Community Prosperous Darlington	There is a shortfall in school places across the Borough and as a result more schools are needed. School age educational achievement varies across the Borough and current performance is below the national average There is a mismatch of qualifications to available employment in the Borough as indicated by a high skills gap
Culture	Prosperous Darlington A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	Participation, provision and awareness of cultural assets and activities in the Borough needs to be supported by the LDF
Health and	A Healthy and Safe Darlington	Overall life expectancy is below national

Recreation		averages and despite some positive health and lifestyle trends Darlington's performance is consistently below national averages. There are also significant ward level variations in health inequality Identified shortfall in provision of some typ recreational facilities and low levels of adults participating in sport

4.5 A4 Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

4.5.1 In order for the LDF to contribute to sustainability, the Core Strategy is required to contribute to addressing the issues and problems identified in table 6. In order to ensure that the Core Strategy DPD does this, it was necessary to develop Sustainability Appraisal Objectives, with input from stakeholders, to test Core Strategy options and policies against. The Sustainability Objectives are a key part of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6: Sustainability Objectives

Sustainability Objectives	Related Topic / Issue
1. Attract, encourage and make provision for young people and families within the Borough, whilst catering for an ageing population	Population
2. Reduce inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged	Deprivation
3.Enhance community identity and create an empowered and engaged borough wide community of town, villages and countryside that values diversity and cares for others	Community Engagement
4.Raise aspirations and improve educational attainment and access to qualifications and skills in all of the community through lifelong learning	Education and Skills
5. Provide a choice and mix of affordably accessible, good quality and well designed sustainable housing	Housing
6. Improve community safety, reduce crime and anti social behaviour and improve public confidence	Crime and Safety
7. Improve the health and wellbeing of all by reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles	Health and Recreation
8. Contribute to One Planet Living	Ecological Footprint
9. Ensure the Borough is prepared for climate change, increase resilience through adaptation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Climate Change and Energy
10. Protect and improve the quality of land and soil and ensure that land and soil is used in a sustainable and innovative manner	Land
11. Protect and enhance ground and surface water quality and make efficient use of water	Water
12. Maintain, protect and improve air quality	Air
13. Protect, conserve and improve biodiverse environments through an increasingly connected and high quality green infrastructure and encourage	Biodiversity and Geodiversity

opportunities for habitat creation	
14. Promote sustainable waste and mineral management, including the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste and mineral resources	Waste and Minerals
15. Promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport	Transport and Accessibility
16. Preserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment, landscape character and settlements and increase engagement in cultural activities	Heritage, Landscape and Culture
17. Achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth	Economy
18. Increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities	Employment

4.5.2 Following the creation of the sustainability objectives, it was deemed useful to undertake an internal compatibility test to clarify tensions between objectives that cannot be resolved. This was undertaken to ensure that subsequent appraisal outcomes of Core Strategy objectives, options and policies are well based, and mitigation or alternatives can be considered. The majority of the sustainability objectives proved to be either compatible or have a neutral impact on one another. This is depicted in Figure 5. However, the compatibility test did identify the following potential tensions.

Table 7: Potential Tensions between Sustainability Objectives

Objective	Objective in conflict with	Conflict
1. attracting new residents to the Borough	**8. one planet living** **9. climate change** **10. land quality** **11. water quality** **12. air quality** **13. biodiversity** **14. waste and minerals**	An increased population will consume more resources, energy and produce more waste. The impacts of this will effect Darlington's ecological footprint, air, land and water quality and biodiversity.
5. housing	**10. land quality** **11. water quality** **12. air quality** **13. biodiversity** **14. waste and minerals** **16. landscape/heritage/ built environment**	Provision of additional housing will increase take up of land. This in turn could impact on biodiversity, landscape/heritage and the built environment. Provision of additional housing will also increase the demand for building materials, and associated waste. The attainment of the building materials and building process itself could impact on land, water and air quality. Provision of additional housing will increase energy use (CO_2 emissions) in the Borough and may increase flood risk depending on location
17. economic growth **18. employment**	**8. one planet living** **9. climate change** **10. land quality** **11. water quality** **12. air quality** **13. biodiversity** **14. waste and minerals**	Increased economic activity will require use of more energy and resources and waste for disposal. Increased energy use associated with economic activity will increase emissions of gases causing climate change. Increased need for resources and energy may cause loss of biodiversity. Provision of new employment land could damage habitats and impact on landscape and the built environment.

		Emissions to the environment and potential for pollution will increase *e.g.* air, water and land.

1. Attract, encourage and make provision for young people and families within the Borough, whilst catering for an ageing population																	
2. Reduce inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged	✓																
3. Enhance community identity and create an empowered and engaged borough wide community of town, villages and countryside that values diversity and cares for others	✓	✓															
4. Raise aspirations and improve educational attainment and access to qualifications and skills in all of the community through lifelong learning	✓	✓	✓														
5. Provide a choice and mix of affordably accessible, good quality and well designed sustainable housing in the places where people want to live	✓	✓	✓	✓													
6. Improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
7. Improve the health and wellbeing of all by reducing health inequalities promoting healthier lifestyles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓											
8. Contribute to One Planet Living	×	0	0	✓	✓	0	✓										
9. Ensure the Borough is prepared for climate change, increase resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	×	0	0	✓	×	✓	✓	✓									
10. Protect and improve the quality of land and ensure that land is used in a sustainable and innovative manner	×	0	0	0	×	0	✓	✓	✓								
11. Protect and enhance water quality (ground and surface) and make efficient use of water	×	0	0	0	×	0	✓	✓	✓								
12. Maintain, protect and improve air quality	×	0	0	0	×	0	✓	✓	✓	0							
13. Protect, conserve and improve biodiverse environments through an increasingly connected and high quality green infrastructure	×	✓	0	✓	×	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
14. Promote sustainable waste and mineral management, including the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste and mineral resources	×	0	0	✓	×	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
15. Promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport	✓	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
16. Preserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment, landscape character and settlements and increase engagement in cultural activities	✓	✓	0	✓	×	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
17. To achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓		
18. Increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	
Sustainability Objective	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**

KEY

✓ **Compatible**

× **Incompatible**

0 **Neutral**

Figure 5: Internal Compatibility Testing of the SA objectives

4.5.3 Following the internal compatibility testing of the objectives, the SA framework was completed. The SA framework includes the sustainability objectives, sub-objectives to guide decision making, and a set of indicators to monitor progress of the Core Strategy in achieving the sustainability objectives. The draft SA Framework was included in the SA Scoping Report which was published for consultation in July 2009 to statutory and non statutory stakeholders and the general public. The final amended version of the SA Framework, which was used to appraise the Core Strategy objectives, options and policies against, is shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8:Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Sustainability Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicator (s)
1.Attract, encourage and make provision for young people and families within the Borough, whilst catering for an ageing population	Will it encourage young people and families to move to the Borough? Will it encourage young people and families to stay within the Borough? Will the needs of an ageing Population be met?	Levels of in-migration Number and tenure of affordable homes built per annum Number of family size homes built (3-4 bedrooms) Number of new developments for young people e.g. youth clubs Employment created from new developments Number of older persons developments including bungalows and sheltered accommodation % of population defined as within 500m of essential facilities and Services % of residents within 400m of public Transport Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood Number of developments that are Disability and Discrimination Act compliant
2. Reduce inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged	Will it help to reduce inequalities in educational achievement? Will it help to reduce inequalities in Employment? Will it help to reduce inequalities in Health Will it improve the public realm	Educational achievement per ward Number of educational developments priority wards? Employment levels in the most deprived wards Increase in average weekly wage (lowest quartile) Life expectancy per ward Health developments in priority wards (e.g. recreation facilities, health facilities etc) Number of section 106 agreements

	within deprived wards?	for public realm improvements
3. Enhance community identity and Create an empowered and engaged borough wide community of town, villages and countryside that values diversity and cares for others	Will it encourage engagement in Community activities? Will it increase the ability of people to influence local decision making? Will it promote mutual understanding different ethnic and cultural groups?	Number of LDF/SA community consultation events Number of community responses received through LDF/SA consultations Level of engagement with hard-to-reach groups
4. Raise aspirations and improve educational attainment and access to qualifications and skills in all of the community through lifelong learning	Will it improve qualifications and skills of young people and adults? Will it address the shortfall in school places?	Education qualifications achieved by Residents Developments incorporating local training/apprenticeship schemes Number of education related developments created or improved
5. Provide a choice and mix of affordably accessible, good quality and well designed sustainable housing.	Will it deliver the appropriate mix of housing to meet the needs of the ageing population, young people and families and skilled in-migrants? Will it deliver adaptable housing to meet the lifelong needs of the population? Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups? Will it reduce the number of people homeless or in temporary accommodation? Will it reduce the number of unfit homes and those falling below the decent homes standard? Will it reduce the experiences of fuel poverty? Will it deliver housing in sustainable locations with access to employment, and services by walking, cycling or public transport?	Household types built Developments constructed to lifetime homes standard Average house price Identified affordable housing need, completions and shortfall in delivery level of homelessness Provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches % homes meeting/not meeting the decent home standard. Empty properties Homes built to ecohomes/CSH mandatory standards % of renewable energy contribution per development Access to services and facilities by pu transport, walking and cycling
6. Improve community safety, reduce crime and anti social behaviour and improve public confidence.	Will it contribute to a sense of personal security and safety? Will it reduce crime and anti-social Behaviour? Will it improve the overall safety of	Number and type of developments meeting ‘secured by design’ principles

	the Borough and help reduce accidents?	
7. Improve the health and well being of all by reducing health inequalities and promoting healthier lifestyles	Will it help reduce health inequalities? Will it encourage healthy lifestyles? Will it improve access to health facilities?	Number of section 106 agreements used to provide new or maintain existing open spaces/play areas/ allotments Number of health related developments created or improved
8. Contribute to One Planet Living	Will it encourage local food production? Will it reduce energy use in homes? Will it reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport modes?	Number of section 106 agreements used to provide allotments Homes built to ecohomes/CSH mandatory standards % of renewable energy contribution per development Access to services and facilities by pu transport, walking and cycling
9. Ensure the Borough is prepared for climate change, increase resilience through adaptation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Will it reduce the risk and impact of flooding? Has the need to cope with climate extremes been considered? E.g. design of buildings and urban Areas Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases? Will it encourage renewable energy generation?	Number of developments requiring a flood risk assessment Number of developments including flood mitigation measures (SuDS) Number of developments that consider climate extremes Number of developments built to BREEAM or other appropriate Energy efficiency standard Emissions of CO_2 Number and capacity of developments approved and installed with renewable energy
10. Protect and improve the quality of land and soil and ensure that land and soil is used in a sustainable and innovative manner	Does it reduce contaminated sites and increase remediation? Will it minimise the loss of land (and soils) to development? Will it prioritise development on previously developed land	Number of contaminated sites remediated though new developments % development on previously developed land % development on Greenfield land
11. Protect and enhance ground and surface water quality and make efficient use of water	Does it improve the quality of water within the borough? Does it reduce the demand for water?	Positive or negative changes in river quality (chemical and ecological) Ground water quality and abstraction Nitrate vulnerable zones Number of developments that incorporate water conservation and pollution control measures e.g. grey water recycling, SuDS.

12. Maintain protect and improve air quality	Will it contribute to reductions in air quality monitoring pollutants at monitoring locations across the Borough?	Per capita emissions of conventional pollutnats (co, VOC, NOx, PM10) Emissions of CO_2
13. Protect, conserve and improve biodiverse environments through an increasingly connected and high quality green infrastructure and encourage opportunities for habitat creation	Will it maintain and enhance habitats and species? Will it protect and enhance habitat corridors and linking routes Does it continue the protection for national and locally designated sites and propose appropriate enhancement? Does it conserve and enhance/create the BAP priority habitats within the Borough? Will it improve understanding of the importance of biodiversity?	Number of developments enhancing Biodiversity (natural SuDS etc) Number of developments contributing to the creation of natural space and wildlife corridors (e.g hedgerow creation) Progress toward standard of natural and semi-natural green space provision of 5ha/1000 population, such that 60% of the urban population is within 9 minutes (600m) walk of at least one accessible site Quality and improvement of SSSI's and LNR's Locally important BAP habitats and populations of BAP species Number of planning applications required to provide ecological surveys. Number of developments that provide opportunities to understand and interact with biodiversity Progress towards provision of at least 1ha of LNR per 1,000 population
14. Promote sustainable waste and Mineral management , including the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste and mineral resources	Will waste be managed close to source? Will it increase the amount of waste and minerals re-used, recovered and recycled? Will it reduce the amount of waste going to landfill? Will it minimise use of new materials and resources	Location of new waste infrastructure Number of developments incorporating recycling facilities e.g. storage, composting Number of developments with a site waste management plan Number of developments using reclaimed materials in construction
15. Promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport	Will it reduce the distance people need to travel to work or to access services and facilities and will it	Number of developments located in close proximity to essential services

	prioritise development on well located sites? Will it enhance transport connections to reduce distances travelled? Will it encourage the use of alternatives to car travel? E.g. walking, cycling and public transport?	 Number of new connected transport routes that create a net reduction in distance travelled Increase in length and quality of public rights of way and cycle routes Level of provision of bus routes as part of new development
16. Preserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable historic environment, landscape character and settlements and increase engagement in cultural activities.	Will it protect and enhance features and areas of historic, archaeological and cultural value? Will it protect and enhance designated areas? Will it protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape? Will it promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings? Will it increase understanding of Darlington's heritage and increase participation in cultural activities?	Identified listed buildings, locally listed/important buildings and structures/heritage, SAMs, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and changes to these Number of up to date conservation area appraisals Number of positive/negative changes to landscape character as a result of incremental development overtime Number of planning permissions delivering benefits to historic and /or settlement character Number of historic buildings brought back into use by new development schemes Number of developments increasing appropriate access to and interpretation of heritage assets Numbers of residents taking part in cultural activities Number of developments incorporating public art works
17. To achieve ambitious, sustainable levels of economic growth	Does it provide for opportunities to Attract new business to the borough? Will it improve business development? Will it improve the resilience of Businesses? Will it promote growth in key economic areas? Will it protect the viability and vitality	Number of economic developments and mixed use developments in the borough Number of businesses and take of land (ha) on allocated employment sites Area of employment land lost to other uses (ha) Number of new employment sites Created Number of town centre and town

	of the town centre? Will it encourage sustainable tourism?	centre fringe development and regeneration schemes Number of tourism related facilities and opportunities (e.g. hotels)
18. Increase employment levels and Access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities	Will it reduce unemployment? Will it increase earnings? Will it reduce car trips to work?	Employment created from new Developments Increase in average weekly wage Number of employment locations that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling

5. Appraisal of Objectives and Options

5.1 Appraisal of objectives

5.1.1 To enable the Core Strategy to deliver the vision outlined in section 1, a number of objectives were established. These are detailed below in Table 9.

Table 9: Core Strategy Objectives

1. Climate Change Cross cutting objective	Minimise the impact of, and adapt to the effects of climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the use of resources and the risk of flooding and pollution and by maximising the re-use and recycling of land, buildings and waste through more sustainable designs, patterns of development and means of movement
2. Equalities Cross cutting objective	Provide equality of opportunity for everyone now and in the future, by ensuring that the design, location and mix of development across the Borough maintains and creates safe, attractive, accessible, healthy and inclusive sustainable communities, eliminating any disadvantage people experience because of where they live
3. Economy	Facilitate sustainable economic growth by protecting and promoting a range and continuous supply of employment development opportunities in sustainable locations that meet t needs of local businesses and continue to attract high quality paid jobs to the Borough
4. Housing	Provide a continuous supply of land for new housing developments and help improve and reuse the existing stock s it can better match the aspirations of those that wish to live and work in the Borough, whilst doing more to meet the housing needs of an ageing population and those unable to afford suitable accommodation on the open market
5. Town Centre	Safeguard the function of Darlington town centre and capitalise on its shopping, culture, leisure, tourism and employment opportunities so that it continues to develop as a vibrant, attractive, safe, friendly and comfortable historic market town centre.
6. Facilities	Safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of educational, social, sporting, health, recreational and cultural facilities, as well as natural and historic environments, so as to contribute to the happiness, fulfilment, health and well-being of people who live and work in the Borough, including children and young people.

7. Character	Preserve the scale of, and strengthen the unique character, function and sense of place of Darlington's neighbourhoods, villages, landscapes, green infrastructure, heritage, habitats and countryside to contribute positively to its distinctiveness
8. Transport	Support initiatives to maintain, expand and enhance facilities a networks for public transport, walking and cycling, so that the connections are in place to enable everyone to get around the Borough easily and affordably, whilst making the most of Darlington's existing transport infrastructure, tackling congestion and improving links to the rest of Tees Valley and further afield

5.1.2 To ensure that the sustainability of the Core Strategy is maximised, the strategic objectives must accord with the principles of the SA objectives set out in the sustainability appraisal framework (table 8). To achieve this, the Core Strategy Objectives were tested to determine their compatibility with the SA objectives using the scoring mechanism outlined in section 3.9.

5.1.3 The outcome of the SA of the Core Strategy objectives is outlined in full in A**ppendix E.** A summary of the main conflicts, mitigation measures and suggested changes to objective wording is detailed below.

Table 10: Conflicting Core Strategy Objectives

Conflicting Objectives						
Core Strategy objective	**SA objective**	**Commentary**	**Mitigation Measure**	**Proposed revised objective**	**Justification for change**	**Change accepted**
1	16	Potential incompatibilities with historic environment and landscape character and climate change mitigation measures e.g. locations of renewable energy schemes. However, adaptation measures may also enhance local distinctiveness and landscapes i.e. protection of urban/rural green infrastructure. Overall the reduction in the causes and impacts of climate change should provide positive effects that will benefit the historic and built heritage of Darlington e.g. reduction in the impact of severe weather events	Potential incompatibilities with landscape and historic built environment could occur if opportunities for renewable energy generation are inappropriately designed and/or located, therefore specific planning polices will need to be developed to prevent any negative impacts.	No wording changes suggested	N/A	N/A
2	N/A	Objective scored positively against all SA objectives	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	9	By providing new sites Economic activity will increase and this will require the use of energy; consequently emissions of greenhouse gases will increase. Localised Flood risk may also increase depending on the design of new economic development sites e.g. increased hard standing areas for car parking.	The criteria for deciding where sites for new economic development will be located and how they are designed must include the environmental aspects of sustainability *e.g.* avoidance of areas of high biodiversity	No wording changes suggested as sustainable design and location is included within cross cutting objectives 1 and 2	N/A	N/A

			value. Sustainable design policies will be fundamental to mitigate environmental impacts *e.g.* waste minimisation, water use, enhancement of biodiversity and incorporation of renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures			
3	11	Demand for water abstraction will increase as a result of increased economic activity. Water quality could also be impacted upon depending on the type of economic activity	As above	As above	N/A	N/A
3	12	increased economic activity will require the use of energy and will increase greenhouse gas emissions, impacting on air quality	As above	As above	N/A	N/A
3	13	The provision of new or extension of existing economic development sites has the potential to have a significant impact on biodiversity. This will occur from land take, habitat fragmentation and the indirect impacts associated with infrastructure and economic activity *e.g.* road traffic	As above	As above	N/A	N/A
3	14	Increasing economic activity Through new sites will result in an increase in the use of resources and therefore the amount of waste produced. Opportunities for increasing recycling may improve if sites are located and designed to facilitate trade waste recycling	As above	As above	N/A	N/A
4	9	Additional housing will increase the Borough's contribution to Climate Change from the emissions of greenhouse gases from the energy used in the construction and the operation of the development	Housing will need to incorporate a high proportion of embedded renewable energy generation, maximise the use of low energy sustainable materials and ensure high standards of energy efficiency. All new housing developments can be carbon neutral and/or contribute to carbon offsetting schemes. Climate Change mitigation and adaptation measures for new housing will be	Improve and **reuse** existing housing stock to better match the aspirations of those that wish to live and work in the Borough and provide a continuous supply of land for housing to meet demand, whilst doing more to meet the housing needs of an ageing population and those unable to afford suitable accommodation on the open market.	'Reuse' added to reflect the importance of bringing empty/ derelict properties back into use. Objective re-ordered to reflect the most sustainable approach to provision of housing in the Borough	Yes

			required both in the design and location of developments *e.g*. passive solar gain, avoidance of areas of high flood risk, use of green roofs, good ventilation.			
4	11	The location of new housing development will need to consider the availability of water and capacity for sewage treatment	Increased pollution that could occur from drainage on new housing sites will need to be mitigated through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	As above	As above	As above
4	13	Providing new sites for housing development could have a significant negative impact on locations with biodiversity value *e.g*. land take	Planning policy Should ensure that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are incorporated into the design of all new housing. Additionally, the criteria for the selection of sites for new housing will need to avoid areas of biodiversity value	As above	As above	As above
4	14	The use of additional resources for new housing will inevitably increase the amount of waste produced *e.g*. construction waste	This impact should Be reduced through sustainable construction methods *e.g*. reuse of construction materials. The design and location of new developments should include measures to improve recycling *e.g* storage of domes recycling and increasing access to recycling facilities	As above	As above	As above
5	11	Increased activity within the Town centre and potential increase in visitor numbers will increase water use, demand, need for treatment and disposal	Locations for new development will need to ensure there is no decrease in water quality and that sufficient water supply and treatment facilities are in place to accommodate the scale of development. New development in the town centre should also be located and designed to protect	Safeguard the function of Darlington's Town Centre and **Town Centre Fringe** and capitalise on its shopping, culture, leisure, tourism, employment and **green infrastructure** opportunities so that it continues to develop as a vibrant, attractive, safe, friendly and comfortable historic market	Widening the objective out to include the town centre fringe will better benefit deprived wards on the town centre boundary and will help to improve the image of the town centre as approaches would be improved. Inclusion of 'green infrastructure' will add to the attractiveness of the town centre	No Not able to include Town Centre Fringe as not able to put the Town Centre and the Fringe on the same hierarchical level, although recognise that the Town Centre Fringe does require improvement. Green

			the functioning of water bodies *i.e*. habitats along the river Skerne/Tees et and linkages	town		Infrastructure should not be included as the town centre is such a small area incorporation would not be feasible.
5	12	Increased tourism related activities in the town centre could increase local air pollution *e.g.* traffic emissions	Sustainable transport methods that reduce the need to travel by private car should be promoted and incorporated into new developments and infrastructure schemes in the town centre	As above	As above	As above
5	13	As objective 5 does not reference urban green space it can be assumed that development and increased activity within the town centre could disturb existing biodiversity and may result in habitat and green infrastructure loss	Ensure that biodiversity and green infrastructure is maintained/ created as part of any town centre development.	As above	As above	As above
5	14	An increase in shopping, leisure And tourism opportunities will lead to an increase in the amount of trade and domestic waste being generated in the town centre and the Borough as a whole through increased consumption of products and use of services. Trade waste recycling is not covered by statutory recycling targets	sustainable building methods are to be used and recycling should be made easier in the town centre through the location and design buildings	As above	As above	As above
6	8,9,10,12, 14,15,16	Effect dependent on the location And design of facilities	While there are uncertainties in relation to implementation the majority of impacts could be positive through the criteria used for the selection of new development sites and the use of high quality sustainable and secured by design principles	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	2,8,9	Effect dependent on implementation	uncertainty in implementation will arise through continuation of poor energy efficiency and high energy use in the maintenance of built heritage. However, all development should comply with energy	Preserve the scale and strengthen the unique character, function and sense place of Darlington's neighbourhoods, villages, landscapes, green infrastructure, heritage, habitats	Although heritage is part and parcel of green infrastructure, it may be worth including for the sake of clarity. Changed 'that' to 'to' as objective needs to be inclusive of strengthening the	Yes

			efficiency building standards. Where conflicts arise through design these should be mitigated through other application of energy efficiency standards within the development *i.e.* increase insulation	and countryside **to contribute** positively to its distinctiveness	sense of place of all areas (not just those that are unique) to contribute to the Borough's distinctiveness	
8	N/A	Objective scored positively against all SA objectives	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.1.4 With the exception of objectives 2 and 8, all Core Strategy strategic objectives had some level of conflict with the sustainability appraisal objectives. In particular, objective 5 relating to economic development in the Borough posed a number of conflicts in relation to environmental impact. However, the negative impacts of the majority of the objectives can be mitigated through sustainable location, design and construction methods. Aside from proposed mitigation measures for the planning policy team to consider in options and policy development, the wording of objectives in relation to housing and local character were changed as a result of the sustainability appraisal process.

5.2 Appraisal of Issues and Options

5.2.1 As discussed in section 3, it was necessary to refresh the appraisal of Issues and Options 2008, due to changes to the sustainability appraisal framework. The decision was also taken to refresh the appraisal of issues and options as new issues and options had been formulated since the previous publication of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report 2008. The formulation of new issues and options was based on the results of emerging studies that provided up to date evidence for example, on Darlington Borough's needs in relation to sports and recreational facilities.

5.2.2 The full results of the refreshed SA of the Issues and Options is detailed in **Appendix F.** A summary of the key outcomes is summarised in the following sections.

5.3 Issue 1: Darlington's Sub Regional Role

5.3.1 This issue considers the role Darlington should play in the sub-region. The role Darlington has within the sub region is important to the way that it is perceived by those wishing to move to the area to live and work and by those considering investing in the Borough. Option 1A recommends that the town should have status as a sub-regional centre within the Tees Valley. Similarly, Option 1B seeks to promote Darlington as a sub-regional centre but focuses upon attracting other investment to meet residents' needs. Option 1C promotes Darlington as a key centre within the Tees Valley City Region which covers a slightly broader area than Option 1A.

5.3.2 SA found Option 1B to be the most sustainable against social and environmental sustainability objectives. Option 1B scored better than 1A against economic objectives and equally to Option 1C. This outcome differs from the appraisal outcome in 2008. The SA of the Options in 2008 against the old SA framework found that 1C scored most positively largely due to economic factors. SA against the updated framework identified that option 1C would certainly provide the most economic growth. However, it would not necessarily meet

the employment needs of local people and would create greater levels of in-commuting than option 1B.

5.3.3 Against social objectives within the updated SA framework, the SA considered that Option 1B was most likely to meet people's needs in terms of reducing inequalities, providing affordable housing in areas of need and matching employment opportunities to local skills. Whilst there were negative effects related to increased greenhouse gases from in-commuting, SA considered that these could be offset by a reduction in out-commuting as jobs are more likely to match the local skills base. SA considered that Options 1A and 1C would lead to greater greenhouse gases from increased in-commuting, which were not likely to be offset by a reduction in out commuting from the Borough.

5.3.4 Although SA highlighted 1B as the most sustainable option, option 1C was taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Option: CS1 Darlington's Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy.

5.4 Issue 2: Planning for Growth

5.4.1 The options considered previously under this issue are no longer options as Darlington Borough Council is now committed to accommodating the housing numbers set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, and to accelerating housing delivery as part of the Tees Valley Housing Growth Point. New options were not generated in relation to this issue.

5.5 Issue 3: Accessibility for All

5.5.1 An important step towards creating a sustainable community is the need to ensure that everyone has access to jobs, facilities, goods and services. This issue explores the ways of ensuring accessibility for all. It proposes a series of five options. The first three options aim to help reduce the need for additional journeys by shaping the pattern of new development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses. These options also seek to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. The fourth option considers a do nothing approach, leaving the future of the Borough reliant upon operation of the transport market.

5.5.2 SA found that a combination of options pertaining to; promoting new development in the most sustainable locations, particularly the town centre and near public transport nodes (3A); promoting more mixed use development including live-work schemes (3B) and; requiring new developments to adopt travel plans and promote walking, cycling and public transport (3C) to have the most beneficial social, economic and environmental impacts. The outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008.

5.5.3 The option relating to leaving the future of the Borough to the future of the transport market was rejected as it would increase reliance on the car. This would infringe on accessibility, particularly for those without access to a car and would increase congestion in the Borough. As a result, traffic related accidents could increase, as would greenhouse gas emissions and negative impacts to water, land air and biodiversity and landscape and heritage (as a result of the need for increased road related infrastructure). The impact of congestion would also have negative impacts on economic development in terms of the loss of productivity that increased congestion can cause, and the reduction in the desirability of the Borough as a place to live and work.

5.5.4 A combination of Options 3A, 3B and 3C were taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Options: CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design and CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network

5.6 Issue 4: Degraded Landscapes and Townscapes

5.6.1 This issue addresses how Darlington's poor and degraded landscapes and townscapes can be improved. As the Borough is considered as the 'gateway' to the Tees Valley, it is important that a positive image of the Borough is portrayed to the wider region. On the whole, there are a number of areas within the Borough where high environmental quality is experienced; however there are still a few areas which would benefit from improvements to the landscape and townscape. Improvements to such areas would help to not only improve visual amenity but would also help to provide a higher quality of life for residents, thus promoting social inclusion and civic pride. The options considered related to; Improving the appearance of the main road, rail and river corridors, access to the town centre, the airport and key gateway sites (4A); Identifying contaminated, unused or underused brownfield sites and prioritise for alternative uses (4B) and Promoting heritage based regeneration schemes to improve the built fabric on Northgate/High Northgate and approaches to Darlington railway station.

5.6.2 SA found that option 4A had the most positive social and economic effects. However, in reality, a combination of all the options would provide the most sustainable effect and the Core Strategy should encourage the improvement of all poor quality landscapes and remediation of contaminated sites in the Borough. The outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008.

5.6.3 Option 4A was taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Option: CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness.

5.7 Issue 5: High Quality, Safe Design

5.7.1 Securing high quality, inclusive design for new developments and public spaces is important as it helps to create an attractive Borough. It is also important that new development seeks to maintain local distinctiveness and enhance Darlington's heritage and character. Although in certain areas the Borough benefits from high quality, sustainable design, some areas suffer from poor environmental quality, which in turn impacts upon the overall image of the Borough. This issue considers the best approach to promoting high quality, safe design in new developments throughout the Borough. The options considered related to Promoting Community Safety in all New Developments (5A) and Promoting High Quality Design Borough Wide that reflects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the area (5B).

5.7.2 SA found that option 5B had the most positive environmental effects. Social and economic effects of both options scored similarly. In particular option 5B scored more positively than 5A in enhancing biodiversity and ensuring that developments fit well with the landscape and contribute positively to local distinctiveness. The outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.7.3 Option 5B was taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Option: CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design.

5.8 Issue 6: Climate Change – Reducing Darlington's Carbon Footprint

5.8.1 A number of new options were generated as part of this issue. Options pertaining to 'Which renewable energy facilities should we encourage in Darlington' were superseded by evidence in the Draft Renewable and Low Energy Study (2009) which provides new evidence on which renewable energy technologies are feasible in the Borough. Options pertaining to 'What standard of provision should Darlington seek from on site renewable energy facilities' were also superseded by evidence in the Renewable and Low Energy Study. Options pertaining to 'What level of sustainable building standards should Darlington seek from new development' were found to be unrealistic based on Government consultation for Zero Carbon Homes, the developer consultation response to Darlington Borough's Design Supplementary Planning Document and new evidence from the Renewable and Low Energy Study.

5.8.2 In relation to 'How should decentralised and renewable energy or low carbon energy be generated in Darlington', only one option was developed, as this was the only option thought to be realistic. This option was 'Through a combination of commercial scale renewable energy, on site provision and establishment of off site carbon reduction scheme' (6A)

5.8.3 This option provided a mixture of social and environmental effects depending on how the option is implemented. For example, positive effects could be realised if renewable energy schemes are publicised and promoted appropriately and could assist in the attraction of new or retention of existing residents. However, negative effects could be realised if commercial scale schemes are sited inappropriately. Inappropriately sited schemes would generate negative publicity, which could influence people's decisions about moving into the Borough.

5.8.4 Option 6A was taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Option: CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy.

5.8.5 In relation to 'What standard of provision should be sought on site', two options were considered. These were 'All major developments, including conversions to provide at least 10% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, including micro-renewables' (6B) and 'All major developments to provide at least 10% and all strategic sites to provide at least 20% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, including micro-renewables'. (6C)

5.8.6 SA found that Option 6C would provide the most positive effects in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In all other social, economic and environmental outcomes, the two options scored equally.

5.8.7 Option 6C was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy.

5.8.8 In relation to 'What level of sustainable building standards should Darlington seek from new development', three options were considered. These included 'Minimum sustainable building standards and reduction of use of the car' (6M), Code for Sustainable Homes 3-6 rating and BREEAM excellent rating, (6N) and 'Promotion of sustainable transport and reduction of use of the car and Carbon neutral development and transport' (6O)

5.8.9 SA found that Option 6N provided the best balance of social, economic and environmental effects. In terms of social effects, all options scored equally. In terms of environmental effects, 6N scored more positively than 6M, but not as positively as 6O. However option 6N scored more positively in terms of economic effects. Potential for negative effects were identified in relation to affordable housing, as although committing to the Code for Sustainable Homes will increase the quality and decency of homes in terms of fuel poverty, requiring developers to build to certain standards will push up costs of development. This could be passed on to the end user, making housing in Darlington less affordable in the short term.

5.8.10 Option 6N was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS2 Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design.

5.9 Issue 7: Darlington's Settlement Pattern – Where Should Development Go

5.9.1 This issue aims to give a broad indication of where all types of development should go. It is important that a balance is achieved between environmental, economic and social impacts. The original options 7A and 7B were eliminated from SA, as they would no longer deliver the housing numbers that need to be provided over the LDF period to 2026. This left Option 7C 'Sustainable locations within and adjoining the Urban Area' and 7D 'Sustainable locations within and adjoining Darlington Urban Area and service and main villages' for appraisal.

5.9.2 SA found 7D would have the most positive social and economic effects compared to 7C. This was largely because the option could bring the positive social and economic effects of new development to both urban and rural areas. In terms of economic effects, 7D would ensure that development would be spread across the Borough, resulting in more people being able to access employment opportunities. However, this option, along with option 7C would result in some negative environmental effects. This outcome accords with the outcome of the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.9.3 Option 7D was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS1 Darlington's Sub-Regional Role and Locational Strategy.

5.10 Issue 8: Paying for Development Infrastructure

5.10.1 Darlington's future sustainable growth and development depends on the timely funding and delivery of supporting infrastructure that reflects the scale and type of development and the needs in the locality. This issue aims to define how planning obligations should be secured and provides two new options to consider. These are, 8A, 'Negotiating planning obligations on a site specific basis to meet identified needs in the locality' and 8B, 'Applying a tariff and/or site specific planning obligations to meet identified local needs'.

5.10.2 SA found Option 8B to have the most positive social and economic effects. This is because it would provide greater certainty in terms of addressing inequalities in the Borough and would provide a more flexible system for developers than option 8A, which would ensure that smaller developers are not discouraged from investing in the Borough. There were a number of uncertainties in relation other social, economic and environmental effects, as the outcome would be dependent on what the contributions would be utilised for.

5.10.3 Option 8B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS4 Developer Contributions.

5.11 Issue 9: Location of New Housing

5.11.1 Housing in Darlington has to meet the needs and aspirations of local people forming new households or seeking a different kind of property. It also has to meet the needs and aspirations of the working people that the Borough hopes to attract to and/or retain in Darlington, to drive local economic growth. This issue considers the strategic locations of new housing developments in the Borough. Principally, the following locations have been identified: The Town Centre Fringe (A),Darlington Urban Area (B), Northern Urban Fringe (C), North Western Urban Fringe (D), North Eastern Urban Fringe (E), Western Urban Fringe (F) and Southern Urban Fringe (G)

5.11.2 SA prioritised the following locations for new housing developments; The Town Centre Fringe (Area A); Darlington Urban Area (Area B); North Western Urban Fringe (Area D); North Eastern Urban Fringe – North (Area E) and Western Urban Fringe (Area F). The prioritisation of these locations was based on the full range of sustainability objectives. However, the differing scores between the locations largely came down to how well the development related to existing communities, shops and services and whether the location would increase congestion and therefore safety issues and air pollution. Mitigation measures for the five prioritised locations were established and can be viewed in full in **Appendix F.**

5.11.3 The areas suggested by SA in descending order of priority were taken into account in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS10 New Housing Development.

5.12 Issue 10: Housing Needs, Mix and Affordability

5.12.1 New housing is required to meet the needs and demand arising from residents at all stages of their life, and to accommodate and retain the people needed to underpin the Borough's economic growth. Different types of housing formed the options for addressing this issue. These included; Affordable Housing (10A), Lifetime Homes (10B), Live – Work Housing (10C) and a Combination of housing types (10D).

5.12.2 SA found that a combination of housing types would have the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. This accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008.

5.12.3 Option 10D was taken into account in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS11 Meeting Housing Needs.

5.13 Issue 11: Improving Older Housing

5.13.1 Darlington is expected to receive little public sector funding for housing renewal or improvements in the short term, so this issue looks at how the improvement of older housing stock could be funded. Options included; Through Market Intervention (11A), Through Planning Obligations (11B) and through a Combination of 11A and 11B (11C).

5.13.2 SA found that a combination of measures (11C) would be required to ensure long-term positive effects. SA concluded that improvements to older housing should be achieved primarily through planning obligations, but also market intervention. This accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.13.3 Option 11D was taken into account in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS12 Existing Housing.

5.14 Issue 12: Providing for Gypsy and Traveller Needs

5.14.1 The Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2009) found no signs that the growth in the travelling populations will slow significantly, and confirmed that, at a local level, there is a need for additional sites. As a result of this assessment the previous option of 'Accommodating Gypsies and Travellers on existing Council sites and private sites only' was discarded as it would be insufficient to accommodate the growth expected. Three options remained for SA including accommodating gypsies and travellers; 'On new or extended Council and private sites (12B); On Transit Sites (12C) or a Combination of 12B and 12C (12D)

5.14.2 SA found that a combination (option 12D) of options 12B and 12C would provide the most positive effects in terms of providing for transient and less transient members of the travelling community. This outcome differs from the SA of the options undertaken in 2008 which found option 12B to be the most beneficial option. However, this was prior to the conclusion of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

5.14.3 Option 12D was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS13 Accommodating Travelling Groups.

5.15 Issue 13: Sustainable Employment Provision

5.15.1 This issue considers how much employment growth should be encouraged within the Borough. The first option (Option 13A) focuses upon a modest then reduced growth scenario. The second option (Option 13B) seeks to maintain a modest level of employment growth, which would see an additional 330 jobs provided per year. In contrast, Option 13C supports a higher level of employment growth, continuing with recent rates of employment growth.

5.15.2 SA found that option 13B would be the most sustainable overall, resulting in better social and economic effects. This option is also more likely to be sustained and will better match anticipated population growth. This accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008.

5.15.3 Option 13B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS5 Supporting the Local Economy.

5.16 Issue 14: Distribution of New Development

5.16.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy supports the development of Darlington as a key employment location. The options within this issue consider how new employment development should be distributed across the Borough. Providing the right kind of employment sites in good locations at a suitable time is important to achieving a sustainable community and should make the most of the Borough's excellent national and international transport links to the Tees Valley, the North East and beyond. The options considered included; Restricted land supply across the Borough (14A); Managed employment land supply across the Borough (14B); Market led employment land supply (14C)

5.16.2 SA found that option 14B would have the most positive social and economic effects and was therefore most sustainable overall. Negative environmental effects identified were largely due to some locations proposed being reliant on car use. This outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.16.3 Option 14B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS5 Supporting the Local Economy.

5.17 Issue 15: Loss of Employment Land and Relocation of Business

5.17.1 Employment land in the Borough is coming under increasing pressure for redevelopment for other uses, particularly housing. This issue aims to help maintain a balance between safeguarding land, redeveloping sites and providing new employment opportunities. The options considered included; Loss and relocation of employment land and businesses (15A); Redevelopment of employment provision (15B); Safeguard employment land (15C); Combination (15D).

5.17.2 SA found that option 15B would have the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. This option will help to maintain stable employment levels across the Borough and will provide a variety of sites with different specifications. Enhancing existing sites will help encourage inward investment into the Borough. This option will have the opposite impact to Option 16A, as it will assist in reducing the need to travel. This outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.17.3 Option 15B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS5 Supporting the Local Economy.

5.18 Issue 16: Darlington's Tourism Offer

5.18.1 Tourism can bring a range of benefits to the Borough including improving the economic and social well being of local communities, as well as being a focus for regeneration and promoting the distinctiveness of the Borough. Any growth to the tourism industry may attract new leisure and tourism developers to the town, generating business which in turn could lead to leisure spin offs. The options considered included; Gateway to the North East (16A); Gateway to the Tees Valley (16B); Position Darlington as a 'rural' city (16C)

5.18.2 SA found that option 16B would have the most positive social and economic effects. This option strikes the balance between the growth of the tourism industry generating additional economic growth and employment as well as social benefits from improved leisure and cultural facilities. It could also see the environmental enhancement and development of regeneration sites. This outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.18.3 Option 16B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS6 Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer.

5.19 Issue 17: Hotel Provision

5.19.1 In order to support Darlington's tourism offer and based on new evidence within the Tees Valley Hotel Futures Study, Darlington could support a range of new hotels. The new options considered in relation to this issue included; Support a range of quality hotels in appropriate locations to meet the needs of the market, complemented by a range of other visitor

accommodation (17A); Promote Central Park as the preferred location for hotel development, followed by a range of hotels in appropriate locations, complemented by a range of other visitor accommodation.

5.19.2 SA found that option 17A would have the most positive economic effects as 17B would have the potential to restrict hotel development and opportunities until the Central Park hotel is established.

5.19.3 Option 17A was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS6 Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer.

5.20 Issue 18: Employment in the Villages and Countryside

5.20.1 Rural areas face a number of key challenges, including a lack of affordable housing and local employment opportunities for local people, retention of key workers and a low wage rural economy. PPS7 entitled 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' highlights that there is an identified need for employment opportunities and diversification within rural areas. The following options considered aim to address this issue; Employment for local needs (18A); Farm diversification and local needs (18B); Employment development throughout the countryside (18C); More protection of the best and most versatile farmland (18D); Combination (18E).

5.20.2 SA found that a combination (18E) of options would provide the most positive social and economic effects, but highlighted controls should be applied to the level of development permitted. This outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.20.3 Option 18E was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS5 Supporting the Local Economy.

5.21 Issue 19: Local Heritage

5.21.1 In addition to the Borough's collection of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings, conservation areas, ancient monuments and sites of national archaeological importance, there are a number of other buildings and features, which although they do not have national protection, are important to the local built environment. It is therefore important that measures are taken to protect the Borough's irreplaceable local heritage and townscapes, whilst conserving areas and buildings of national value. This issue therefore considers how the Borough's heritage should be both protected and enhanced. Options considered include; Only preserve and enhance the character or appearance of statutory historic and environment features and landscapes (19A); Protect and enhance the Borough's key townscape, landscape and historic features (19B); Promote heritage based regeneration schemes for improvements to specific parts of the town (19C); Combination (19D).

5.21.2 SA found that a combination (19D) of options 19B and C would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. Option 19A was discarded as protection of statutory features only would not provide enough protection for buildings etc that are of local historic importance and contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the Borough. This outcome accords with the SA of the options undertaken in 2008

5.21.3 Option 19D was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness.

5.22 Issue 20: Urban Fringe

5.22.1 The urban fringe is a diverse area, which lies between the edge of the urban area and the agricultural land beyond and contains a mix of houses, industrial units, farmland, as well as providing recreational links to the countryside. There is considerable scope to improve the recreational, biodiversity and access potential of this area, whilst promoting local agricultural practices. Options considered include; Promote greater levels of access and informal recreation (20A); Promote multifunctional spaces (20B); Encourage variation in agricultural practice that promotes a high quality landscape (20C); Encourage only high quality, small scale appropriate development that adds value to the urban fringe (20D); Combination (20E).

5.22.2 SA found that a combination (20E) would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects as all options provide many positive benefits. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008

5.22.3 Option 20E was taken forward in the development of the following Revised Preferred Options: CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness and CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

5.23 Issue 21: Biodiversity

5.23.1 The Borough has a varied and biodiverse rich landscape, comprising of national, regional and locally important wildlife and geological sites. Whilst there are a variety of species and habitats within the Borough, it is important that a greater variety of species and habitats are encouraged. This issue looks at how biodiversity should be promoted across the Borough. Options considered include; Keep the current level of protection and promote biodiversity in new development (21A); Keep the current level of protection and identify areas at risk to provide additional protection where needed (21B); Identify and protect a network of sites and corridors, introduce improved management of the network for biodiversity (21C); Provide additional protection on all sites (21D); Give priorities to local nature reserves, local sites, the Tees Forest and key, identified sites; Combination (21F)

5.23.2 SA found that a combination (21F) would provide the most positive social and environmental effects. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.23.3 Option 21F was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

5.24 Issue 22: Trees and Woodlands

5.24.1 Trees provide a valuable landscaping and amenity resource, which help to create a positive image of the Borough. However, whilst tree cover has a number of environmental benefits, if it is not managed properly, it can have a negative impact as it can be perceived as unsafe. Options considered included; Only protect existing tree cover from loss or damage from new development (22A); Protect existing tree cover and support woodland planting on key brownfield development sites, along the urban fringe and major transport corridor sites, where appropriate (22B); Maintain and protect healthy trees, promote replacement planting, community forest development and new planting in areas with low levels of tree cover (22C).

5.24.2 SA found that option 22C would be the most sustainable option with the most positive environmental and economic effects. This option seeks to promote replacement planting and new planting in areas with low levels of tree cover. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.24.3 Option 22C was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

5.25 Issue 23: Flood Risk

5.25.1 Government guidance (PPS25) requires the planning process to effectively and sustainably manage flood risk. In order for the Core Strategy to address this issue, previous options were rejected and a new option was considered. This is as follows: Follow the sequential approach to development and ensure appropriate surface water management and flood mitigation is incorporated in the design where appropriate (23A).

5.25.2 As this was the only option put forward to address the issue, it was not possible to compare the effects of this option alongside any other. However, this option scored positively on social, economic and environmental factors and as a result, no mitigation measures were suggested.

5.25.3 Option 23A was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

5.26 Issue 24: Protecting People and the Environment

5.26.1 Exposure to pollution can seriously affect quality of life as well as having an impact upon the environment. There are a number of different forms of pollution, which can arise as a direct result of particular activities, these include air, noise and light pollution and contaminated land. This issue considers how the impact of pollution in specific areas can be reduced, thus improving the quality of the environment. The options considered included; Develop strict guidelines over the location of new development which could add to air pollution (24A); Provide locational guidelines for developments that could cause vibration, noise and dust (24B); Develop appropriate controls for the development of contaminated, unused or underused brownfield sites (24C); Combination (24D).

5.26.2 SA found that a combination (24D) of options would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. However, this option was difficult to appraise as the options considered help to reduce the impact of pollution and do not necessarily reduce the levels of pollution. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.26.3 Option 24D was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety.

5.27 Issue 25: Protecting the Open Space Network

5.27.1 Open spaces across the Borough have a range of different purposes and do not all have equal importance in terms of their visual amenity and their sport, recreation and nature conservation value. The aim of the Borough's Open Spaces Strategy is to improve open spaces and increase their value to people and nature. In certain circumstances, spaces can become targets for anti-social behaviour, and the perceived fear of crime at such sites c can

discourage people from using these spaces. Consequently, higher levels of funding are then required to maintain their quality, and as a result have a direct impact upon the quality of other sites within the Borough. In some instances, therefore, it can be more appropriate and beneficial to dispose of the poorest quality sites, as this would allow funding to be targeted on improving fewer sites. In this context, this issue considers how the Borough's open spaces should be protected. The options considered include; Only permit development of open spaces if identified as redundant in needs assessment (25A); Only permit development on locally important open space if ancillary to open space use and if improves the remaining part of the open space network and if redundant in needs assessment (25B); Allow development of open space if for regeneration and equal alternative provision is made elsewhere (25C).

5.27.2 SA found that option 25C would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. Option 25C only allows development on open space if it is for regeneration purposes. As there are a number of poor quality open spaces within the Borough, developing these sites would have a positive impact in helping to reduce problems of anti-social behaviour and would allow resources to be targeted elsewhere within the Borough. Allowing development for regeneration would provide additional benefits to the wider community and could help to create an inclusive community. Although this option provides developers with the flexibility to deliver new development, developers are required to provide equal alternative provision elsewhere within the Borough. This option therefore allows the Borough's other economic and social objectives to be pursued, whilst offering protection against the amount of open space provided across the Borough. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.27.3 Option 25C was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network.

5.28 Issue 26a: Playing Pitches

5.28.1 Playing fields provide a valuable community resource and the associated recreational benefits can be experienced by all. The Darlington Playing Pitch Strategy (2009) identified that Darlington has a shortfall of 18.5 playing pitches against need. The options generated try to address this issue. The options considered included; Identify high quality strategic sites and lower quality local sites (26B); Require new or extended private playing pitches to have a community access agreement (26B); Combination (26C). The original option of 'encourage use of accessible as well as underused school playing pitches to meet identified needs and the needs of the active population' was rejected for the refreshed appraisal of options as it is not realistic in terms of addressing the identified shortfall.

5.28.2 SA found that a combination (26C) of options will provide the most positive social and environmental impacts (26B will aim to provide the appropriate mix of pitches and 26C will help to increase the number of private pitches that can be used by the community). This outcome differs from the SA of options undertaken in 2008, which found the now rejected option to be the most sustainable.

5.28.3 Option 26C was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities.

5.29 Issue 26b: How Should Sports Facilities be Provided in the Borough

5.29.1 Darlington has a wide, varied range of indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities. Playing pitches, synthetic turf pitches and multi-use games areas provide opportunities for football, rugby union, cricket and hockey, with other facilities providing locations for bowling, tennis, athletics, golf, swimming, court sports, health and fitness, gymnastics and boxing. However, the Darlington Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2009 identified that the quality and accessibility of sports facilities varies greatly, and does not always meet the community's needs or future aspirations for adult and junior sport. The new options considered aim to address this issue and include; Maintain, enhance and improve access to the current level of provision (26D); Maintain, enhance and improve access to the current level of provision and seek to address deficiencies through new development (26E); Through the hub and spoke model maintain, enhance and improve access to sports facilities (26F).

5.29.2 SA found that option 26F would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects, as unlike the other options, it would address quality issues and deficiencies in facilities and would not be dependent on new development proposals coming forward. No negative effects were identified with this option and, as such, no mitigation measures were recommended.

5.29.3 Option 26F was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities.

5.30 Issue 27: Open Spaces for Children and Young People

5.30.1 In addition to playing pitches and sports facilities, it is important that communities have access to good quality accessible open spaces for children and young people. Within the Borough, the best equipped play areas are at South Park and North Park, referred to as the strategic sites. Other sites across the Borough provide a more limited range of equipment suitable for children. Given the aims of the Open Spaces Strategy, this issue considers how an accessible quality open spaces network for children and young people can be provided. The option considered included; Identify high quality strategic sites and quality local sites (27B). In the previous SA work undertaken a further option 'Protect and improve existing sites'(27A) was also considered. However, this option was rejected, as it was felt that it would not go far enough to address issues of demand.

5.30.2 As this was the only option put forward to address the issue, it was not possible to compare the effects of this option alongside any other. This option scored positively against the majority of sustainability objectives. However potential for negative effects for biodiversity were identified as the option may lead to a loss of some open space sites. As a result it will be necessary for the biodiversity value of the site to be recognised prior to re-development and that any loss to biodiversity is compensated for in the locality.

5.30.3 Option 27B was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network.

5.31 Issue 28: Quality and Safety of Open Space

5.31.1 The quality of open space has a direct influence on how well the space is used. Poor quality open space can often become the focus for anti-social behaviour as there is a perception that the space is not well maintained. It is important to create an environment in which people feel both safe and secure. The options considered to address this issues included; Require all new open spaces to be designed to secured by design standards (28A); Make improvements

to the quality and safety of exiting open spaces from planning obligations (28B); Use public investment and partnership funding to improve quality and safety of open spaces and planning obligations for children's play areas (28C); Identify priority areas for public investment (28D); Combination (28E).

5.31.2 SA found that a combination (28E) of the options would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. There could also be a potential for positive impacts for biodiversity if investment to improve the quality of open space includes enhancements for biodiversity. No negative effects were identified against the sustainability objectives. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.31.3 Option 28E was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network.

5.32 Issue 29: Open Spaces in Rural Areas

5.32.1 The provision of open space is equally as important in the Borough's rural communities as it is in the urban areas. On the whole, within the settlements of Middleton St George, Hurworth and Heighington, accessibility to open space is considered as good. However between the settlements there are variations in the quantity and type of open spaces. This issue considers how the quality, quantity and accessibility of rural open spaces should be improved, ensuring that the scale and type of provision is appropriate to the settlement size. The option considered to address this issue included; Develop separate provision standards for the villages in consultation with the local community, taking account of population and access to existing provision (29B). In the previous SA work , a further option 'Same Policy for open spaces in villages as for the urban area'(29A) was also considered. However, this option was rejected as it was recognised that this option would lead to sizes of open space too small for the purpose which in the long run could become unused and a target for anti-social activity.

5.32.2 As 29B was the only option put forward for consideration, it was not possible to compare the effects of this option alongside any other. However, this option scored positively on social, economic and environmental factors and as a result, no mitigation measures were suggested.

5.32.3 Option 29B was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network.

5.33 Issue 30: The Town Centre

5.33.1 This issue considers how the vitality and viability of the town centre should be safeguarded and promoted. The 'Pedestrian Heart' environmental and traffic improvements funded by the Council and One North East are now helping to encourage an increase in visitors to the town centre. Similarly, the new shopping and parking facilities recently opened at Crown Street and the proposals for 'The Oval' all seek to improve the health of the town centre. These developments, combined with other site opportunities which are likely to arise within the inner ring road, would mean that the town centre is expected to be able to accommodate most of the Borough's future growth needs for town centre uses. The options considered included; Adopt a rigorous and pro-active approach to promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre (30A); Adopt a less rigorous approach recognising the potential benefits of some 'town centre-type' development elsewhere in the Borough (30B).

5.33.2 SA found that option 30A would provide the most positive social, environmental and economic effects. The town centre serves as one of the key economic assets of the Borough and should therefore be promoted and protected, where possible, from potential threats. Option 30A is also supportive of National Planning Policy which advocates a 'town centres first' approach and seeks to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for the growth and development of existing centres. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.33.3 Option 30A was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS7 The Town Centre.

5.34 Issue 31: The Hierarchy of Centres

5.34.1 The Borough has a well developed hierarchy of centres in the existing Local Plan. The RSS highlights that within the Tees Valley city region, the majority of new retail and leisure floor space should be focused within Middlesbrough and Darlington. Within Darlington, the main focus for shopping is the town centre. This is followed by the district centres at Cockerton, and North Road and the local centres at Yarm Road, Whinfield, Neasham Road and Mowden, which seek to meet the everyday shopping needs of the local community. However, in recent years, there has been considerable variation in the vitality of these centres. Through the LDF process, there is an opportunity to review the hierarchy, with the potential to allocate new centres where a critical mass can be identified. The options considered included; Keep the current hierarchy (31A); Designate further local centres (31B); Amend the hierarchy to more strictly reflect current national planning policy (PPS6) (31C); Amend the hierarchy less severely (31D); Change the hierarchy in a different way (31E).

5.34.2 SA found that option 31B would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. Option 31B provides the opportunity to cater for the everyday needs of the community if localised gaps in provision are identified. The provision of new shops, services and local facilities would also create a number of new local jobs, which in turn, would benefit the local community. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.34.3 Option 31B was taken forward in the development of the Revised Preferred Option: CS9 District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services.

5.35 Issue 32: Access to Local Facilities

5.35.1 Local shops, services and facilities provide an important role in the communities that they serve, as they help to enable people to meet their everyday needs, close to where they live. Leisure and community facilities also provide an important focus for the local community. In this context, it is important that these facilities are protected. In recent years, provision of accessible local shops and services across the Borough has decreased and without intervention, it is likely that this trend may continue, due to other development pressures. This issue has therefore been developed to consider how good access could be provided to local shops and services. The options considered included; Keep local shops, services and facilities which serve the needs of nearby residential areas and require sites to be set aside in new development areas (32A); Protect existing facilities from proposals elsewhere which would undermine their vitality and viability or from redevelopment (32B); Combination (32C).

5.35.2 SA found that a combination (32C) of options would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. Combining the options will ensure that existing facilities are protected from proposals elsewhere in the Borough and that opportunities are taken to set aside areas in new developments for the provision of new local shops and services. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.35.3 Option 32C was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS8 Additional Retail Provision.

5.36 Issue 33: Transport Infrastructure

5.36.1 The Cross Town Route is a scheme which has been proposed since the 1970s with the aim of helping to alleviate congestion, through carrying cross-town traffic between the A66 bypass south of Great Burdon and the A1 (M)/A68 at Faverdale. In the 1990s, a short section of the route was constructed in the west at Faverdale and in 2008, the eastern section between the A66 and Haughton Road was completed, now known as the Eastern Transport Corridor. Since this section has been implemented, the Council have continued to safeguard the central section of this route. However, with changing attitudes towards transport planning, a decision is now needed as to whether the central section of this route should continue to be safeguarded. In view of this, this issue considers whether land should be protected to deliver the central section of the Cross Town Route. The options considered included; Continue to safeguard a line for the central section of the Cross Town Route, if supported by a detailed technical assessment (33A); Remove the safeguarding line for the central section of the Cross Town route (33B).

5.36.2 SA found that option 33B would provide the most positive social, economic and environmental effects. However, it was stressed that the recommendations of the SA should only form one element in the overall decision process. In order to make an informed decision on the future of this route, it is critical to consider the results of the technical assessment. This outcome accords with the SA of options undertaken in 2008.

5.36.3 Option 33B was taken forward in the development of Revised Preferred Option: CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network.

5.37 Cumulative Impact Assessment of the Issues and Options

5.37.1 Whilst the impacts of the individual options have been identified, it is important to assess the cumulative impact of the options, to determine whether there are any options that alone have insignificant effects but in combination with other options, generate significant positive or negative effects; or where several individual effects have a combined effect.

5.37.2 In order to record the cumulative effects of the recommended options, it was necessary to produce a table that summarises the effects of each option against the sustainability objectives. This table can be found in **Appendix G.** The cumulative effects and their causes are detailed in Table 11.

Table 11: Cumulative Effects of Recommended Options

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Causes	Possible Mitigation Measures
Climate change	Worldwide	Greenhouse gas emissions from increased traffic volume, in commuting and flights from the airport, loss of carbon sinks (trees/ woodland etc) to development, increased energy use of new developments.	Preferred Options to prioritise new development in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Preferred Options to also protect carbon sinks and green spaces and ensure new developments are built to high energy efficiency standards.
Loss of land to development	Local loss of soil Resource and Potential amenity, biodiversity and landscape value	Development on Greenfield sites	Preferred Option to prioritise development on previously developed sites. Where greenfield sites will be required, these are to be of low biodiverse, amenity, landscape and agricultural value.
Decline in water quality	Rivers and streams flowing into and out of the Borough and groundwater sources	Increased run off from roads and hard standing associated with new development (e.g. car parks). Increased sewerage output from new housing and economic developments	Preferred Options to ensure SuDS are incorporated into new developments and any improvements to the road network. Preferred Options to also ensure that there is sewerage capacity to respond to increased growth. Where this may not be the case, the Preferred Options must aim to seek the contributions required to ensure capacity will be developed in the Borough in line with any proposed developments.
Decline in air Quality	Local communities Wildlife Habitats	Increase in traffic volume and possible congestion. Emissions from biomass schemes	Preferred Options to prioritise new development in sustainable locations accessible by walking. cycling and public transport. Preferred Options to seek contributions toward highway improvements to relieve congestion. and biomass schemes to be fitted with air quality controls.
Habitat and species loss	Wildlife habitats	Removal of habitat due to new development, Loss of scrub areas due to landscape improvement schemes, disturbance to species through location of wind turbines and increased traffic volumes	Preferred Options to prioritise location of development away from areas of high biodiversity value, and to ensure that habitat creation is part of any new development and landscape improvement scheme. Any loss of habitat should be compensated for in the locality. Wind turbines to be sited in appropriate locations and development to be prioritised in sustainable locations to reduce car use.
Direct and indirect impacts on the historic environment and loss of landscape character	Heritage and local character and distinctiveness	Inappropriate location, design and scale of new developments. Inappropriate location of renewable energy schemes i.e. damage to archaeological remains from construction, impairment of historic setting and visual amenity of the wider landscape. Vibration levels to sensitive historic buildings/sites/ features from increased traffic	Preferred Options to ensure protection of national and locally important historic environment. Design of new developments and renewable energy schemes to be appropriately located and be of an appropriate scale to the historic environment and the wider landscape. Design of new developments to incorporate positive design features that repeat or reflect historic characteristics. Developments and infrastructure to incorporate good landscaping and screening schemes to minimise impact

			to the wider landscape. Developments to be prioritised in sustain locations to reduce car use.
Loss of tranquillity	Countryside	Development of Greenfield land within the rural area. Increase in noise and congestion. Inappropriate development within the countryside	Limits to development in the countryside set. Type of development to be suitable and appropriate to protecting the vitality and viability of the countryside. Preferred Options to prioritise development in sustainable locations to reduce car use. May be required to increase the frequency of public transport services to rural parts of the Borough.

6. Appraisal of Core Strategy Preferred Options

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A framework of policies to steer spatial development in Darlington Borough has been developed. Similar to the Core Strategy Objectives and Options, the environmental, social and economic effects of these policies were assessed using the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) framework.

6.1.2 The detailed appraisal matrices are provided in **Appendix H** and are summarised below for convenience. The following sub-sections summarise the outcomes of the appraisal and recommend mitigation measures to enhance positive effects and assist in implementation.

The policies are provided in full with additional reasoned justification in:

- Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Options, January 2010

6.2 CS1: Darlington's Sub-regional and Locational Strategy

6.2.1 This policy focuses upon Darlington's role in the context of the sub region and identifies where new development and regeneration activity will be concentrated. This revised draft policy most closely reflects Option 1C Key Centre within the Tees Valley City Region and Option 7D Sustainable locations within and adjoining Darlington Urban Area and service and main villages.

6.2.2 Policy CS1 was assessed as having a number of positive effects, particularly in relation to achieving economic growth and increasing employment levels in the Borough. By encouraging new development in the Borough, it will help to strengthen Darlington's role as a sub-regional centre and key location in the Tees Valley City Region. In addition, the provision of enhanced infrastructure will be a key factor in helping the Borough to retain and attract new businesses and may contribute to boosting growth in the tourism industry. This policy would also help to protect the economic viability of rural areas.

6.2.3 As a result of development and regeneration activity, this policy will assist with the attraction of new residents and retention of existing residents and will help to address inequalities in deprived parts of the Borough. This policy should also have positive effects on health, through the prioritisation of development in sustainable locations that are accessible by

walking and cycling. There will be further positive effects on education and skills, as additional employment in the Borough will lead to opportunities for apprenticeships and skills development.

6.2.4 However, Policy CS1 also gave rise to potential for negative effects. Attraction of residents from outside the Borough would increase competition for affordable housing and increased in commuting from the region and sub region could impact on road related safety. Increased in commuting would also impact on greenhouse gas emissions and could lead to a decline in air quality if mitigation measures are not put in place. New development and regeneration activity could also have negative effects on water quality, biodiversity, waste arisings, the historic environment and landscape character depending on what design and landscaping measures are incorporated.

6.3 CS1 Mitigation Measures

6.3.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- To ensure that residents benefit from affordable housing provision, it may be necessary to consider designating some schemes for existing residents only.

- To mitigate against high levels of in-commuting by car, sub regional and regional public transport schemes such as the Tees Metro will need to be developed. The frequency of bus service may also need to be increased – *CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network*

- In order to ensure that new development and regeneration projects contribute positively to water, biodiversity, waste arisings, historic environment and landscape character this policy new developments will need to be compliant with policies relating to – *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design; CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness; CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity; CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety; CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network*

6.4 CS1 Recommendations

6.4.1 It is recommended that the policy is reordered so that Darlington's historic role as a market town and host to a thriving and modern town centre is the first consideration for encouraging growth, development and enhanced infrastructure. Darlington may not be effective in any other role – sub-regional centre, gateway to the region etc. if its own role is not first protected and promoted.

6.5 CS2: Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design

6.5.1 This policy is intended to ensure that good quality, safe, sustainable and inclusive design will be promoted in all new developments. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 3A, 3B, 3C, 5B and 6N.

6.5.2 This policy scored positively against the majority of sustainability objectives. The policy scored particularly positively against climate change and historic environment objectives.

Ensuring that sustainable design is promoted in all new developments will help to reduce energy use in homes through the application of sustainable design standards (BREEAM and increasing Code for Sustainable Homes Rating). The policy will also reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport modes. Both measures will help to reduce greenhouse gases related to new development. In relation to historic environment, the policy scored particularly positively as the design of new development will be required to prioritise the reuse or adaptation of existing historic buildings, and will be required to reflect the character of the Borough including historic features (such as materials used and scale) into modern contemporary developments.

6.5.3 Although, on the whole, this policy scored positively, there were a few sustainability objectives against which it was felt that this policy could potentially have a negative effect. These related to provision of affordable housing and economic growth. Incorporating safety, security and environmental measures into new development may increase the costs of new housing and impact on overall affordability and the level of design assessments required may discourage smaller developers from investing in the town.

6.6 CS2 Mitigation Measures

6.6.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- The LDF will need to set a target number for the numbers of affordable housing units that should be provided/year – *CS11 Meeting Housing Needs*
- To help ensure that developers are not put off by the quality of design that this policy is advocating, pre-application and planning application discussions should be positively encouraged

6.7 CS2 Recommendations

6.7.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the policy are recommended.

6.8 CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy

6.8.1 This policy sets out the broad locations of commercial-scale renewable energy schemes and identifies what level of renewable energy contribution should be achieved at strategic locations and for major developments. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 6A 'Through a combination of commercial scale renewable energy, on site provision and establishment of off site carbon reduction scheme' and 6C 'All major developments to provide at least 10% and all strategic sites to provide at least 20% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, including micro-renewables'.

6.8.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have a mixture of positive, uncertain, no significant effects and effects that could be positive or negative, depending on implementation. Positive effects were broadly in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing fuel costs and providing opportunities for potential growth of the green technologies sector within the Borough.

6.8.3 The effects that are dependent on implementation related to whether:

- communities would be consulted on and engaged with regarding the location of renewable energy schemes;
- Air quality controls would be incorporated into biomass schemes;
- Whether the additional cost of installation of renewable energy to the developer would be passed on to the house buyer;
- The proximity of schemes to residents and the potential health implications of noise, vibration, etc;
- The location of wind turbines would affect any bird species;
- The location and scale of schemes in relation to the historic environment and their setting in the wider landscape.

6.9 CS3 Mitigation Measures

6.9.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- Opportunities to engage communities in meaningful discussions regarding renewable energy should be sought

- The health impacts of any renewable energy scheme should be fully assessed prior to installation. In the case of wind turbines these should be located at an appropriate distance from residential areas. In the case of biomass heating schemes these should include appropriate emissions and odour controls – *CS16 Protecting Environment Resources, Human Health and Safety*

- As for health, biomass heating schemes should include appropriate emissions controls - *CS16 Protecting Environment Resources, Human Health and Safety*

- Renewable energy schemes should be located away from nationally and locally important habitats and important feeding and breeding sites. In this case of birds and wind turbines, these should be located away from major migration routes – *CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity*

- Location of large scale renewable energy schemes should avoid conservation areas, sites of archaeological importance and locally valued landscapes. In the case of wind turbines the size of the turbines should be considered in the setting – *CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness*

6.10 CS3 Recommendations

6.10.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the policy are recommended. (please refer to appendix J).

6.11 CS4 Developer Contributions

6.11.1 This policy describes how planning obligations will be negotiated to secure the necessary physical, social and environmental infrastructure required as a consequence of development. This revised policy most closely reflects Option 8B, 'Applying a tariff and/or site specific planning obligations to meet identified local needs'.

6.11.2 On appraisal, this policy scored positively against the majority of sustainability objectives. Where the policy did not score positively, it was scored as having no significant effects. The policy scored particularly positively against sustainability objectives relating to education, housing and transport. In terms of education, the policy will help to address current shortfall in school places in the Borough and will also provide construction based opportunities for employment skills and training. Also, enhancement and provision of children's' play areas will improve participation in 'play' which is linked to achievement in formal learning The policy will also help to address the shortfall of affordable housing in relation to needs. In terms of transport, planning obligations will be sought for infrastructure that improves accessibility by sustainable transport modes. Improvements to roads and highways may also help to improve transport connections in the borough and reduce overall distances travelled,

6.12 CS4 Mitigation Measures

6.12.1 As this policy scored positively, no mitigation measures were put forward

6.13 CS4 Recommendations

6.13.1 No changes to the policy are recommended.

6.14 CS5 Supporting the Local Economy

6.14.1 This policy focuses upon ensuring that the Borough maintains a continuous and diverse supply of employment land in appropriate locations, in order to meet the existing and future economic development requirements. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 13B, 14B, 15B and 18E.

6.14.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have a mixture of positive and negative effects and effects that could be either negative or positive, depending on policy implementation. The policy scored particularly positively against the sustainability objective relating to education. Additional employment in the Borough is likely to lead to more opportunities for apprenticeships and access to qualifications and skills. This policy may also go some way to addressing employment inequalities in the Borough.

6.14.3 The policy scored negatively in relation to enhancing community identity, as this policy does not address employment in the villages and countryside. This may hinder proposals for diversification, which could result in an out-migration from rural areas.

6.15 CS5 Mitigation Measures

6.15.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- The policy will need to be compliant with CS1 to ensure that the rural economy is sustained – *CS1 Darlington's Sub-regional Role and Locational Strategy*
- New employment sites to be designed to 'secured by design' principles and impact on roads to be understood and potentially mitigated through highways improvements. Businesses to be encouraged to adopt travel plans – *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design, CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network*
- Design of new development to be energy efficient and to contribute to the landscape and potential industrial heritage settings. In some cases landscaping and screening may be required - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design, CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness*
- Expansion of industrial sector and airport to incorporate the appropriate air quality emission controls - *CS16 Protecting Environment Resources, Human Health and Safety*

6.16 CS5 Recommendations

6.16.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the policy are recommended. (please refer to **Appendix J**).

6.17 CS6 Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer

6.17.1 Enhancing the Borough's tourism and cultural offer can support regeneration, provide employment opportunities, support rural diversification and improve local quality of life. This policy sets out how Darlington's tourism offer can be improved. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 16B Gateway to the Tees Valley and 17A Support a range of quality hotels in appropriate locations to meet the needs of the market, complemented by a range of other visitor accommodation.

6.17.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have very positive effects and some negative effects against the sustainability objectives. Key positive effects related to:

- attracting new residents to the Borough and enhancing facilities for existing residents;
- Improving access to and understanding of heritage assets;
- Improving engagement in cultural activities and;
- Supporting growth in the tourism and cultural sectors.

6.17.2 Key negative effects pertained to:

- Increased pressure on the housing market making housing less affordable;
- Increased in commuting and volumes of traffic in the countryside. This will increase greenhouse gas emissions and impact on air quality

6.18 CS6 Mitigation Measures

6.18.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- The LDF will need to set a target number for the numbers of affordable housing units that should be provided/year – *CS11 Meeting Housing Needs*

- Traffic calming in some areas may be required to reduce impacts to community safety - *CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network*

- An increase in traffic to the Borough will need to be mitigated through strong promotion and marketing of public transport options. In some cases it may be required to enhance the frequency of bus services to more rural locations such as Ullnaby village, a park and ride scheme could also possibly be considered depending on viability - *CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network.*

- Tourism related attractions and hotels will need to incorporate water conservation measures and pollution control measures in their design - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design.*

- Local nature reserves will need to be well managed with well defined paths to reduce disturbance to species and damage to habitats from visitors. In order to enhance biodiversity, new tourism attractions and hotels could incorporate habitats such as tree planting and green roofs - *CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design.*

- Tourism attractions and hotels should incorporate recycled materials in construction and put site waste management plans into practice. Developments should include space for waste facilities - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design.*

6.19 CS6 Recommendations

6.19.1 Promoting appropriate nature based tourism attractions which support visits to and enjoyment of the countryside to be changed to: Promoting appropriate nature **and countryside** based tourism attractions which supports visits to and enjoyment of the countryside.

6.19.2 This policy would then be supportive of diversification schemes such as tea rooms, farm shops, etc. which are not a tourism attraction in themselves but enhance the enjoyment of visits to rural parts of the Borough

6.20 CS7 The Town Centre

6.20.1 This revised draft policy sets out how the vitality and viability of the Town Centre will be safeguarded and enhanced. It most closely reflects Option 30A, 'Adopt a rigorous and pro-active approach to promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre'.

6.20.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have largely positive effects against the sustainability objectives, but some effects could be positive or negative, depending on how the policy is implemented. Key positive effects related to:

- Attracting new residents to the Borough through new jobs, services, leisure and retail opportunities in the town centre;
- Providing for existing residents by making the most of the town centre and address its weaknesses ensuring that current residents are better provided for;
- Enhancing overall community identity. Positive effects can be further enhanced by engaging with residents on specific development briefs and generally in terms of what things they would like to see improved in the town centre;
- Promoting traffic reduction - Locating retail, office, leisure, entertainment and other main town centre uses within the town centre will reduce the distance that the majority of the Borough's population have to travel to access these facilities. This should help to encourage walking and cycling modes. Furthermore the town is well served by public transport.

6.20.3 Effects that are dependent on how the policy is implemented relate to:

- Waste and minerals - Effect depends on whether reclaimed materials will be used in the construction of town centre and town centre fringe development schemes and whether existing buildings will be utilised in new developments. Effect also depends on whether new retailers in the town sign up to trade waste recycling contracts, but this is beyond the control of planning.

- Historic environment - Development within or adjoining the town centre is likely to fall within or adjoin the Town Centre Conservation Area. When making proposals, developers should ensure that they preserve and enhance the setting of the Town Centre Conservation Area and preserve the setting of listed buildings and key landmarks.

- Economic growth - In the short to medium term, prioritising development in the town centre location only could potentially discourage some investors, as town centre sites may not allow their needs to be met (non-retail development, in particular).

6.21 CS7 Mitigation Measures

6.21.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- physical housing or contribution towards new housing in the town centre could be requested as part of any major retail scheme. This could help to alleviate issues surrounding the difficulty of deliveriing new housing in the urban area due to land contamination issues, etc – *CS4 Developer Contributions.*

- Developers should be encouraged to set out in their proposals what element of the construction will be from reclaimed materials and how any construction waste will be dealt with (site waste management plans etc) - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design.*

- New comparison and convenience retail should be designed in accordance with the

Local Character and Distinctiveness policy and the Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design Policy to ensure that retail will not detract from but will aim to enhance the qualities of the Town Centre Conservation Area - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design, CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness.*

- Developers will need to follow planning policy in terms of a 'town centre first' approach. However investment opportunities that are not suitable for the town centre or cannot be accommodated in the town centre should not be discouraged but should be directed towards alternative sustainable locations where available – *CS5 Supporting the Local Economy.*

6.22 CS7 Recommendations

6.22.1 No changes to the policy are recommended

6.23 CS8 Additional Retail Provision

6.23.1 This draft policy identifies how additional comparison and convenience retail floorspace will be provided, by when and how much. This revised policy most closely reflects Option 32C

6.23.2 On a whole, this draft policy scored positively against the sustainability objectives. However, it was not possible, in some cases, to determine the long-term effects of this policy, as additional retail provision beyond 2016 is not quantified. Some potential for negative or positive effects were identified against environmental objectives. These included:

- Waste and minerals - Effect depends on whether reclaimed materials will be used in the construction of town centre and town centre fringe development schemes, and whether existing buildings will be utilised in new developments. Effect also depends on whether new retailers in the town sign up to trade waste recycling contracts, though this is beyond the control of planning.

- Historic environment - Development within or adjoining the town centre is likely to fall within or adjoin the Town Centre Conservation Area. When making proposals, developers should ensure that they preserve and enhance the setting of the Town Centre Conservation Area and preserve the setting of listed buildings and key landmarks.

6.24 CS8 Mitigation Measures

6.24.1 Mitigation measures are the same for those set out for CS7.

6.25 CS8 Recommendations

6.25.1 No changes to the draft policy are recommended.

6.26 CS9 District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services

6.26.1 This draft policy sets out the hierarchy of centres within the Borough and identifies the role for these centres. This revised policy most closely reflects Option 31B 'Designate further local centres'.

6.26.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have either positive or no significant effects against the sustainability objectives. Particularly key positive effects related to:

- Attracting and retaining existing residents - the identification of additional local centres at West Park and Middleton St. George will enable continued and possibly enhanced provision of day-to day amenities in these areas. The draft policy will also protect and promote individual shops and services and small neighbourhood clusters, which will also help to meet local needs of existing residents. This draft policy particularly benefits an older, potentially less mobile population.

- Promoting traffic reduction – traffic reduction will be promoted by; safeguarding local centres; limiting the size of retail in local centres so as not to encourage out of town shopping; through provision of individual shops and services to address deficiencies.

6.27 CS9 Mitigation Measures

6.27.1 To maximise the positive effects of this policy, Darlington Borough Council will need to ensure that appropriate litter and on-street recycling facilities are in place to minimise litter in and around local centres and individual shops.

6.28 CS9 Recommendations

6.28.1 No changes to the policy are recommended.

6.29 CS10 New Housing Development

6.29.1 This policy sets out how many new houses are required in the Borough, their broad locations, and the phasing of development. This revised policy most closely reflects Options: Area A, Area B, Area D, Area E and Area F.

6.29.2 On the whole this policy scored positively in relation to social and economic objectives. However, negative effects and potential for negative effects were identified. The key positive effects related to:

- Provision of affordable housing – the majority of locations put forward in this policy have been identified as having a high need for affordable housing;
- Attraction of new residents - due to the transformation of the town centre fringe and for the North Western Urban Fringe and Eastern Urban Fringe locations, good access to existing facilities, local shops, workplaces, services and the strategic road network.

6.29.3 The key negative effects related to:

- Biodiversity and geodiversity - One location is within an area of relatively high biodiversity value and one other location would result in the loss of some urban habitat to housing.

6.30 CS10 Mitigation Measures

6.30.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- Where new housing will result in the permanent or temporary damage of habitats, directly or indirectly, on or off site, developers should be required to contribute to a net biodiversity gain in the Borough. This could be achieved as follows:
- Site mitigation measures should be put in place to protect protected species;
- Create habits on site by encouraging soft landscaping in design, green roofs etc;
- New habitats should use local native species and should be accompanied by a management plan;
- Ensure that any habitat/specie loss is compensated for in the locality;
- Create and improve the connectivity and quality of wildlife corridors.

- If significant new housing were to be built in the North Western Urban Fringe investment in all forms of transport infrastructure may be required to prevent further congestion and the risk this can cause to road safety - *CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network.*

- New housing will need to ensure a high standard of energy and water efficiency and consider measures to alleviate the level of flood risk - *CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design, CS16 Protecting Environment Resources, Human Health and Safety.*

- Further mitigation measures relating to waste arisings, impact on historic environment and landscape and economic growth are detailed in Appendix H.

6.31 CS10 Recommendations

6.31.1 No changes to the policy are recommended.

6.32 CS11 Meeting Housing Needs

6.32.1 This policy focuses upon ensuring that the Borough delivers an overall balanced housing stock that meets the needs of new and existing residents. Two of the key challenges facing the Borough relate to meeting the needs of an increasingly ageing population and increasing the supply of affordable housing. This revised policy most closely reflects Option 11D.

6.32.2 On appraisal, this draft policy scored positively against the social and economic objectives and some of the environmental objectives. The key positive effects relate to:

- Attraction and retention of residents - Provision of a mix of identified housing types based on up to date evidence will help to meet the needs of current residents and will further help to attract new residents to the Borough. The needs of an ageing population are taken into account in this policy through purpose built housing and adaptable homes.

- Provision of affordable housing – Sets out ambitious targets based on level of need.

- Economic growth - Providing housing attractive to people coming to live and work in the Borough will help to support the Borough's economy both in terms of day to day local spending and from input of skills to key economic sectors.

6.32.3 Potential for negative effects depending on policy implementation pertain to:

- Water quality and capacity of water supply and sewage systems;
- Direct and indirect loss of biodiversity through habitat removal and increased disturbance.

6.33 CS11 Mitigation Measures

6.33.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this draft policy. Where possible links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy draft policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- New housing development to take into account capacity of water and sewage infrastructure. Improvement of current infrastructure could be aided through planning obligations – *CS4 Developer Contributions;*
- Biodiversity – measures as for CS10.

6.34 CS11 Recommendations

6.34.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team no changes to the policy are recommended. (please refer to Appendix J).

6.35 CS12 Existing Housing

6.35.1 This draft policy recognises the importance of regenerating and improving existing housing areas. This revised draft policy most closely reflects Option 12D, 'Combination'.

6.35.2 This draft policy scored positively in the long term against the majority of sustainability objectives. However, in the short to medium term, there could be potential negative effects as the draft policy advocates selective demolition under certain scenarios. SA identified the following short and medium term negative effects:

- Decline in sense of community identity, particularly if communities are not engaged in local decisions as to where any demolition should take place;

- Process of demolition will increase housing vacancy rates, which could have a knock on effect on crime and anti-social behaviour;

- In the short term, the effects of selective demolition could have a negative effect on the character and landscape of a neighbourhood. Particular negative effects on character could occur in the Northgate area, a designated Conservation Area.

6.36 CS12 Mitigation Measures

6.36.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this draft policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- Communities will need to be involved in decision making about how their neighbourhoods should be redeveloped. In particular communities should be involved in any demolition proposals to ensure that redevelopments that do take place will have a positive impact on 'sense of place and 'sense of belonging'. Local communities must feel that they are part of the decision making process and that their views are taken into account.

- Crime - it will be necessary to ensure that any plans for demolition are released at the appropriate time and that a good partnership between the Council, police and communities affected is formed. It may also be beneficial to investigate how other local authorities have tackled crime and disorder issues in areas where demolition is taking place.

- Enhancements to the local environment to include habitat creation/restoration measures – *CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.*

- Adaptation of old housing to be sensitive to historic features, to prevent their loss. Demolition criteria to include reference to local historic importance of older housing. New developments to be designed to incorporate and reflect the distinctive features and character of the neighbourhood/ward – *CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness.*

6.37 CS12 Recommendations

6.37.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the draft policy are recommended (please refer to **Appendix J**).

6.38 CS13 Accommodating Travelling Groups

6.38.1 This draft policy focuses on ensuring that adequate provision is made within the Borough for gypsies and travellers. This revised policy most closely reflects Option 13D, 'Combination'.

6.38.2 Where this draft policy was found to have an effect against the sustainability objectives, this effect was largely positive. The policy will help to address the shortfall in provision of sites and will address inequalities in terms of access to services (i.e. health care and education) that the travelling community can experience. Providing permanent pitch sites will also improve the public confidence of the travelling community, and will impact positively on the wider community in terms of reducing the number of unauthorised encampments. However, some negative effects were identified through the SA process and these relate to:

- Extension of existing sites and allocation of additional sites in the short term may cause unrest amongst residents, despite requirements for sites not to impact on existing residential amenity.

6.39 CS13 Mitigation Measures

6.39.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this draft policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- To mitigate for potential short tem negative effects caused by the extension of existing sites or provision of new sites, both residents and travelling groups will need to be consulted and well informed about the proposals. Any issues arising from the proposals can be aired and discussed thoroughly in order to alley concerns or misunderstandings.

6.40 CS13 Recommendations

6.40.1 Policy to include additional criteria in relation to prioritisation of additional sites on brownfield land. The following wording should also be changed:

'have appropriate access and are in a sustainable location for schools, shops and other local facilities; To be changed to:
'have appropriate access and are in a sustainable location for schools, shops, **employment opportunities** and other local facilities **and services**.

Inclusion of employment opportunities to reflect that provision of additional pitches will improve stability and as a result the need for local employment may be enhanced. Inclusion of 'and services' to reflect that the provision of additional sites will need to consider what services (waste collection/recycling etc) can feasibly be provided to the site.

6.41 CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness

6.41.1 This draft policy focuses upon protecting and enhancing the Borough's local character and distinctiveness as this is an important and highly valued part of local identity. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 4A, 19D and 20E.

6.41.2 On appraisal, this draft policy scored positively against the majority of sustainability objectives. Key positive effects related to enhancing community identity and preserving and enhancing the Borough's historic environment, landscape character and settlements. Only one objective could have positive or negative effects depending on implementation; this was reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures and renewable energy schemes. For example, uPVC double glazed units and solar panels may not be appropriate in conservation areas.

6.42 CS14 Mitigation measures

6.42.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this draft policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- Where conflicts arise these should be mitigated through other application of energy efficiency standards, e.g. increase insulation. Medium to large scale renewable energy schemes should be sited to avoid damage to archaeological features and the visual impacts including cumulative visual impact of any scheme on landscapes should be assessed – *CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy.*

6.43 CS14 Recommendations

6.43.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the policy are recommended (please refer to **Appendix J**).

6.44 CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

6.44.1 The draft policy sets out how to maintain the sustainability of target priority habitats and species, to contribute to the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 20F, 21F and 22C.

6.44.2 On appraisal, this policy scored positively against all sustainability objectives with the exception of those pertaining to housing and economic growth, which could have positive or negative effects depending on implementation. Key positive effects relate to:

- Water quality - Policy aims to protect and improve watercourses and wetland. Incorporation of SuDS will also help to minimise discharge of pollution to watercourses from surface water run off, and will help to protect and enhance ground water quality.

- Biodiversity – Policy will encourage connectivity of habitats and will include biodiversity enhancement measures in the design if new development;

- Historic environment/landscape – The policy will ensure the protection of ancient woodland and will protect and extend the role that habitat cover in the Borough plays in relation to landscape character.

6.44.3 However, potential for negative effects were also identified as developers may wish to pass on the cost of incorporating biodiversity into new housing onto the house buyer, making homes in the Borough less affordable. Protection of biodiversity could also constrain the location or increase the costs of new economic developments that are required to support economic growth.

6.45 CS15 Mitigation Measures

6.45.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise the potentially negative effects associated with this draft policy. Where possible, links have been identified to other relevant Core Strategy policies that should be considered integral to any mitigation strategy:

- Developers to observe targets set for affordable housing and pre-application and planning application discussions should be positively encouraged – *CS11 Meeting Housing Needs.*

- Developers will be required to submit an Ecological Masterplan and management plan which will show how the developers could put measures in place to maintain and enhance biodiversity on site. If the measures are acceptable, the constraints on the location of new development, in some circumstances, could be removed.

6.46 CS15 Recommendations

6.46.1 Following consultation with the Planning Policy team, no changes to the policy are recommended (please refer to **Appendix J**).

6.47 CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

6.47.1 Whilst it is important to protect the Borough's environmental assets, it is also important to protect people from the adverse effects arising from development, to ensure that development which is delivered is both environmentally and socially sustainable. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 23A and 24D.

6.47.2 On appraisal this draft policy scored positively against all sustainability objectives with the exception of objectives relating to; inequalities, community identity, education, historic environment/landscape and employment. The policy was found to have no significant effect against these objectives. The policy scored particularly positively against the objective pertaining to community safety. The policy advocates that the majority of new development will be located in areas away from environmental hazards. In exceptional circumstances, development will only be permitted if the risk can be mitigated for ensuring the safety of residents. In some cases, development may help to improve environmental risk sites, e.g. by remediating contaminated land and underpinning unstable land.

6.48 CS16 Mitigation Measures

6.48.1 As this policy scored positively, no mitigation measures were put forward.

6.49 CS16 Recommendations

6.49.1 No changes to the policy are recommended.

6.50 CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network

6.50.1 This policy focuses upon protecting and enhancing the quality of the Borough's green infrastructure. This revised policy most closely reflects Options 25C, 27B and 29B.

6.50.2 On appraisal, this policy scored positively against the majority of sustainability indicators. However, for positive effects to be long lasting, it is essential that green infrastructure is maintained and properly managed according to its purpose. Where the policy did not score positively it was found to have no significant effects. Particularly key positive effects of the policy include:

- Retaining existing residents - Green infrastructure is one of Darlington's key assets, as such, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure will help to meet recreational, aesthetic needs etc of current residents.

- Enhancing community cohesion - Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure will ensure that green spaces can be continued to be used for community activities such as community events held in local parks, allotment growers groups and informal social opportunities, such as parents socialising whilst at a children's play area.

- Health and wellbeing - Enhancement of green infrastructure will encourage participation in walking and cycling and other informal and formal recreation activities in the Borough. Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure will also aid wellbeing in terms of opportunities to relax and experience tranquillity

- Land - Protection of green infrastructure will reduce the loss of land to development and in doing so help protect the Borough's soil resources and function.

- Water quality - Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure will protect and possibly increase current storm water and normal runoff infiltration rates, helping to prevent pollutants from being transported to surface waters and reducing pressure on sewerage systems. The natural infiltration capabilities of green infrastructure can also improve the rate at which groundwater aquifers are replenished.

- Biodiversity - the policy will have positive effects as it will aid the protection and enhancement of habitats, species and associated corridors and linking routes across the Borough.

6.51 CS17 Mitigation Measures

6.51.1 As this draft policy scored positively, no mitigation measures were put forward.

6.52 CS17 Recommendations

6.52.1 Policy to include consideration of green infrastructure in terms of its value to reduce flood risk too.

6.53 CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities

6.53.1 This draft policy sets out a hierarchy of provision in relation to sports and recreation facilities and how these facilities will be protected. This new policy most closely reflects options 26C and 26F.

6.53.2 On appraisal, this policy was found to have a mixture of positive effects and no significant effects (given the specific nature of the policy) against the sustainability objectives. The key positive effects relate to health and wellbeing due to enhanced quality, access to and provision of sport facilities. This policy will also go some way to addressing health inequalities in the Borough, which is a significant issue.

6.54 CS18 Mitigation Measures

6.54.1 As this policy scored positively, no mitigation measures were put forward

6.55 CS18 Recommendations

6.55.1 No changes to the policy are recommended

6.56 CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network

6.56.1 This draft policy identifies specific priorities for improvements to the road and rail, public transport, walking and cycling networks, and aims to improve efficiency, focusing on promoting more sustainable travel choices to ensure that there is a choice of safe, efficient and affordable means of travel available to everyone. This revised policy most closely reflects option 33B.

6.56.2 On appraisal, this draft policy was found to score positively and very positively against the majority of sustainability objectives. Key positive effects pertain to:

- Attracting and retaining residents - Reducing congestion, improving integration of modes and improving access to services and facilities by walking cycling and public transport will make the Borough a very attractive place for people to live, in terms of the Borough's ease of internal travel and access to other parts of the region. Improving accessibility to health and leisure services will be particularly key for an ageing population.

- Improving health and wellbeing - Improving public rights of way, cycleways and general accessibility to employment, education, health, recreation, leisure and shopping facilities by walking and cycling. Further improvements to air quality as a result of a potential reduction in car use will help to reduce the cause of respiratory problems.

- Economic growth - The policy will help to support Darlington's accessibility by rail and road which will contribute to improving existing resilience of business and will help to attract new business to the Borough, particularly those who are reliant on good transport networks and connections to the rest of the region.

6.56.3 However, the policy has the potential for negative effects in terms of inequalities, as it currently only addresses improving transport infrastructure for disabled people. Also the policy, whilst it recognises the need to reduce the contribution of transport to climate change, does not consider what measures to put in place to ensure that infrastructure can withstand impacts of severe weather events, flooding of roads and structural damage to bridges etc.

6.57 CS19 Mitigation Measures

6.57.1 The negative effects of this policy can be mitigated by changes to the wording of the policy

6.58 CS19 Recommendations

6.58.1 Equalities could be better addressed by changing the fifth paragraph to:

For cycling, walking and other public transport, this will be by:
(g) improving accessibility **for all** to employment, education, health, recreation, leisure and shopping facilities, particularly fresh food shops;

6.58.2 To ensure the policy recognises the need for transport infrastructure to be adaptable to climate change the policy should include wording such as:

Measures to adapt to climate change will be put in place, where appropriate to ensure the continued operation of the transport network and associated infrastructure.

6.59 Cumulative Impact Assessment of the Revised Policies

6.59.1 Whilst the impacts of the individual policies have been identified, it is important to assess the cumulative impact of the policies to determine whether there are any policies that alone have insignificant effects but in combination with other policies generate significant positive or negative effects; or where several individual effects have a combined effect.

6.59.2 In order to record the cumulative effects of the policies, it was first necessary to produce a table that summarises the effects of each policy against the sustainability objectives. This table can be located in **Appendix I.** The cumulative effects and their causes are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12: Cumulative Effects of Revised Policies

Cumulative Effect	Affected Receptor	Causes	Possible Mitigation Measures
Affordability of housing	New and existing residents	The enhanced desirability of the Borough as a place to live and work as a result of the policies could drive local house prices up, reducing affordability of existing housing. Coupled with this the requirements from developers to incorporate safety and environmental measures into new housing could be passed back to the house buyer, reducing overall affordability	Compliance with CS11 in terms of affordable housing targets. Possible introduction of a number of existing resident only affordable housing schemes. Developers to be positively encouraged to engage in pre-application and planning application discussions regarding the level of safety/ environmental standards to be incorporated.
Climate change	Worldwide	Policies will increase emissions from commuting to employment and visitor attractions. Emissions will also increase by expansion of the logistic and industrial sector. The expansion of the airport will also increase emissions from volume of flights. Increased need to protect new developments and infrastructure from weather extremes	Compliance with CS19. Work with partners to increase frequency, quality and connectivity of public transport links from and to the Borough. Encourage new businesses to adopt travel plans. Incorporate green space and SuDS with developments and infrastructure to reduce flood risk. Construct infrastructure and new developments to withstand weather extremes.
Decline in water quality	Rivers and streams flowing into and out of the Borough and groundwater sources	Increased run off from roads and hard standing associated with new development (e.g. car parks). Increased sewage output from new housing and employment developments.	Compliance with CS15, 17 and CS4. Ensure SuDS are incorporated into new developments and infrastructure. (will reduce run off of pollutants and will assist with groundwater recharge)

			Work with Northumbrian Water and developers to ensure that sewerage capacity can respond to increased growth in a timely manner.
Decline in air Quality	Local communities Wildlife Habitats	Increase in traffic volume and possible congestion. Emissions from biomass schemes.	Compliance with CS16 in terms of ensuring that new industrial processes and biomass schemes are compliant with UK and EU emission limits. Work with partners to ensure that highways are improved to reduce congestion from increased levels of growth.
Habitat and species loss	Wildlife habitats	Removal of habitat due to new development. Increased disturbance from renewable energy schemes and recreational pressure on sites.	Compliance with CS15 in terms of ensuring that biodiversity is designed into new developments and no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough occurs. Investigate the need to undertake an in depth scoping study in relation to the locations of wind turbines and effects on migratory birds and potential disruption to breeding sites. Impact of increased visits to local nature reserves, SSSI's etc. to be assessed and mitigated for, in line with the conservation objectives of the site.
Waste arisings	Resources	Increased waste from construction process and use of mineral resources. Increased waste levels from an increase in households and employment sites.	Compliance with CS2 in terms of reuse of recycled materials in construction. All major developments to have a site waste management plan in place. Work with partners to ensure that increased households and employment sites can be provided with domestic and trade waste recycling facilities and services.
Direct and indirect impacts on the historic environment and loss of landscape character	Heritage and local character and distinctiveness	Inappropriate location of renewable energy schemes, i.e. damage to archaeological remains from construction, impairment of historic setting and visual amenity of the wider landscape.	Work with partners to ensure that scale and location of renewable energy schemes are suitable in terms of the historic environment and landscape setting. Archaeological surveys may need to be undertaken prior to development.

7. Conclusion

7.1 In summary, generally the Core Strategy DPD policies are considered to contribute positively towards creating a more sustainable Borough. Policies are supportive of; reducing the need to travel through the prioritisation of sustainable locations; ensuring design of developments contributes to the character of the Borough and reduces operational impact on climate change and other environmental receptors, meeting the needs of residents whilst strengthening the Borough's economic role and contribution to the sub region and beyond.

7.2 Collectively, the policies scored particularly positively in terms of:

- Attracting new residents to the Borough, whilst making provision for existing residents
- Reducing inequalities;
- Enhancing community identity and engagement;
- Providing a safer and healthier Borough;
- Reducing the ecological footprint;
- Making the best use of land and soil resources;
- Increasing economic growth through measures that safeguard and aim to expand contributing factors;
- Increasing opportunities for employment in line with increased economic growth

7.3 Where negative effects have been identified, a combination of mitigation measures that included compliance with other policies in the Core Strategy has been recommended. The SA also recommended changes to a number of the policies to mitigate for negative effects or increase the positive effects of the revised policies. The suggested changes to policy wording within this report will be incorporated into the final version of the DPD.

7.4 Further to this, to eliminate any areas of uncertainty identified by SA it is advised that potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of new developments upon the environment, health, community safety etc are examined on a site specific / project level.