

**DRAFT DPD3: Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan Development Plan Document.**

**Issues and Options June 2007**

**Introduction**

Yarm and Eaglescliffe are the principal settlements forming the southern built up area of Stockton conurbation. Dissected by the meandering River Tees, Yarm and Eaglescliffe also incorporate the older settlement of Egglescliffe, and the parish of Preston. The whole area has a long history through the ages as a port, major river crossing and trading post, and then later with the coming of the railways major growth linked Yarm with Stockton. However the area has retained a distinct character of its own.

Generally regarded as one of the best places to live in the Borough, with historic buildings, attractive suburbs and a good range of services and facilities, the area consistently attracts families and young executive people. This wealth of opportunities and people invariably attracts a significant level of investment, and with an ageing Local Plan forming the basis of much of the Planning Policy framework, there is now a need for a joined up approach to future development in Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

The Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan Development Plan Document will perform this role by providing an up to date picture of recent projects, plans and schemes, and then develop a common approach to guide future developments for the forthcoming years.

**Scope, Role and function of the AAP**

The AAP will manage change in the area, allocating sites for different uses, showing how these will relate to each other and setting out design requirements to ensure that any change is well integrated into the existing development. The AAP will also set the timetable for implementation of development, enabling people to see when these changes may start taking place. The quality of the built environment, the access, provision and quality of public open spaces, including streets, squares and green areas, could be safeguarded and enhanced through positive action via this document. The AAP can help the area meet the potential it clearly has by ensuring that investment occurs in a comprehensive and coordinated way without harming the appeal of the area.

The Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan (YAEAAP) will round up all of the established plans and strategies in one document to make it simple to see what is happening, and what is going to happen in terms of built development over the coming years. This will include a comprehensive review of key projects that have recently begun, or have recently been granted planning permission.

The DPD will then review the range of plans, projects and strategies that are in the pipeline and intended to be delivered over the coming years, and develop a policy framework to pave the way for their delivery.

By working with the community, the aim is to conceive a vision for the longer term that sets out the aspirations of the local people with regard to delivering sustainable development. This will broadly guide the type, location and scale of development in the established parts of the study area. This will include an evaluation and the promotion of some smaller potential development sites.

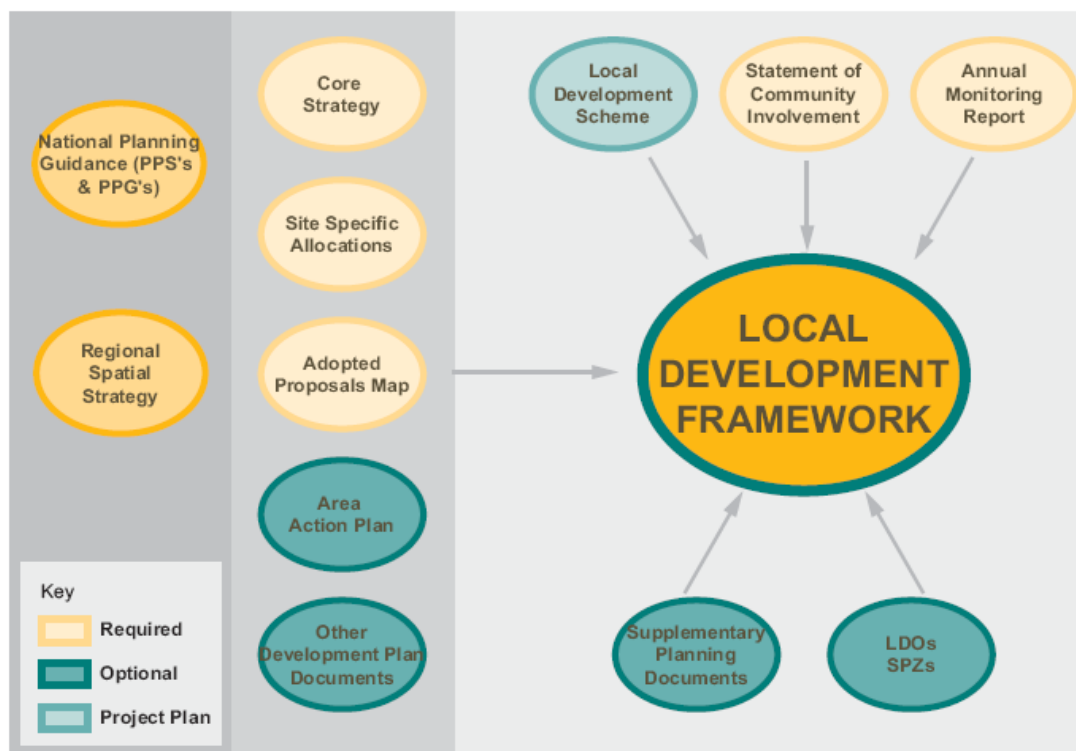
The area is very large - much larger than most Area Action Plans other Authorities are developing - and therefore the content will be at a more strategic level, with occasional in-depth look at specific sites.

The YAEAAP will however not do any of the following:

- Alter, delete or replace any existing policy framework
- Revoke or amend any existing planning permission or approved project or scheme
- Deal with developments outside the boundary shown on the map
- Allocate large areas of land
- Unduly restrict any reasonable development proposal

### Status of the Area Action Plan

Area Action Plans are part of the portfolio of Development Plan Documents that will make up the Local Development Framework, along with a variety of other related planning documents, which will replace the existing Stockton Local Plan (1997).



### Timetable for Adoption of the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan DPD

The timetable for Adoption of the AAP is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2007. There has been some slippage but the amended timetable below will recover the timetable and enable the Preferred Options stage to be reached in May-June of 2008 as scheduled in the LDS.

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|--|------------------------|
| 1. Consultation on Issues and Options  | July-August 2007       |
| 2. Preparation of Options Report   | September-January 2007 |
| 3. Consultation on Preferred Options / initial sustainability appraisal (SA) | May -June 2008         |
| 4. Consideration of Representations and Preparation of Submission Document   | July – Dec. 2008       |

5. Submission of DPD / Final SA to SoS	Jan. 2009
6. Consultation Period on Submission of DPD	Jan.2009 – Feb.2009
7. Pre-examination consideration of Representations	March – April 2009
8. Pre-Examination Meeting	April-May 2009
9. Examination	July 2009
10. Receipt of Binding Planning Inspector's Report	January 2010
11. Adoption	March 2010

### **Policy background**

The 1997 Local Plan, together with Alteration Number One to the Local Plan 2006 are the key policy tools used in determining planning applications. The Tees Valley Structure Plan supports these at the sub-regional level. None of these documents have any undeveloped allocations or schemes to implement, but instead carry forward generic Development Control policies that follow the national and regional planning policy and guidance.

Looking in greater detail, the urban areas are mainly “white land” where there is no specific action required, and where the existing land use is generally expected to remain. The urban area is surrounded by farmland and/or Green Wedge, which are subject to a restrictive set of policies designed to prevent significant built development, and to maintain and open rural character. The majority of retail and commercial development is directed to a small number of key destinations, including Yarm District Centre and Station Road, Eaglescliffe. Finally, there are a number of policies in the Local Plan that designate footpaths, open spaces, and other small issues.

There are three Conservation Areas designated in the study area –Yarm, Egglecliffe Village and Eaglescliffe With Preston. These have recently been subject to an appraisal and management plan, published as part of the Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Folder.

Moving into the new Local Development Framework system of planning, there are also a number of documents that are being developed to replace the old Local Plan and Structure Plan. These include the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, which identifies the Tees Valley as a growth area, and at the local level the Core Strategy that sets out broad strategies for locating development in the Borough. As these documents are adopted, they will sit above the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan and guide it.

### **Development Background**

The development of towns is never complete, and seldom is there a period of inactivity as all sorts of building and change takes place according to individual timescales. From simple household conservatories through to major Housing Market Renewal schemes, there is always some form of development taking place. As affluent areas, Yarm and Eaglescliffe are particularly busy places and it can sometimes be difficult to see the bigger picture of how the area is evolving. This section is designed to set out a comprehensive picture of what is currently going on.

The following projects have already been granted planning permission and/or have other formal status. They can be implemented immediately, and indeed by the time this document is published some may have already have begun and possibly even completed. They cannot be changed or stopped through the Adoption process for the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan, and are included in this document purely to give a complete picture of how Yarm and Eaglescliffe is shaping over the coming years.



**Willey Flatts/The Meadowings, Yarm**

Throughout 2005, Stockton on Tees Borough Council in partnership with Willey Flatts Field Regeneration Group and Yarm Town Council secured a cocktail of funding to implement a large-scale environmental improvement project on Willey Flatts Field in Yarm. The project aimed to improve a public open space which is poorly used by local residents and has fallen into degradation due to lack of proper maintenance and persistent instances of crime and anti social behaviour. Over £150,000 has been spent and the project has just been completed – go and visit the site to see the work for yourself!

**Yarm Town Hall Redevelopment**

Planning permission has just been granted for the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall to provide a visitor's centre and office space on the ground and first floors. Improvements to the exterior will also enhance the appeal of the building.

**The Spittal Roundabout**

The traffic island at the junction of The Spittal and Worsall Road has been remodelled to make a gateway feature for people travelling in to Yarm from the South. Stockton Council and Yarm Town Council commissioned a local artist blacksmith to design the features. This was a difficult job because of the underground cables and pipes, but it was completed in March 2007.

**Footpath link Worsall Road to Snaiths field**

Improvements to the surface to improve wheelchair and perambulator access on this important shortcut from suburban Yarm to the District Centre were completed recently.

**Apartments**

There have been a number of planning permissions granted in recent years for apartment schemes, particularly around Eaglescliffe Station. These individual developments are at various stages of completion. However most have begun construction. Upon completion and allowed to mature, they slowly become part of the fabric of the urban area. Schemes include single plots in Eaglescliffe as well as larger more complex sites such as Low Church Wynd in Yarm. Other key schemes include the former Parklands Garage in Eaglescliffe, the corner of Bentley Wynd and The High Street, Yarm, the junction of Durham Lane and Urray Nook Road site, and the recent permissions for a residential care home on Yarm Road.

**Yarm High Street**

The replacement of the cobbles across the High Street has been completed with additional smooth surfacing for disabled assistance. The project ensures the long life of these well-loved features that at one time were under threat from possible removal.

**Tall Trees Development**

The Tall Trees Hotel complex has recently been granted outline planning permission to redevelop the site with an upgraded hotel and leisure complex together with a large number of luxury apartments. Work has not yet begun on this site but is anticipated in the short term.

**The Winter Gardens at Preston Park**

Work has begun on the Winter Gardens ("the greenhouse conservatory") on the side of Preston Museum at Preston Park. The project will restore the frame and glass of the winter garden to its former glory and allow it to house its impressive range of flora once again.

**Campbell's Garage, Yarm High Street**

The former Campbell's Garage has been given Conservation Area Consent for demolition, paving the way for a redevelopment of the site, although no scheme has been granted planning permission yet.

**Copsewood, Eaglescliffe**

The large garden at Copsewood, Eaglescliffe has outline planning permission for

residential development in a scheme that protects the main house from demolition, and retains a reasonable garden space for the house.

### **Issues and Options**

Through this document, the Council is seeking the views of local residents to agree a coordinated way forward to deliver plans and strategies in Yarm and Eaglescliffe, and to develop a common vision for future development. This document is designed to stimulate debate and to generate ideas and proposals for development so that it can be taken into account and coordinated so that local people do not feel “bombarded” by the constant development.

This is your chance to have your say about how Yarm and Eaglescliffe area evolves over the coming years.

In order to write this document, the Council has consulted with a range of organisations to bring together their plans and strategies, and grouped them to show how these will develop the area. However, this is not a comprehensive suite of projects as it is hoped that private developers will also add their projects and schemes into the Action Plan to give as big a picture as possible.

It is hoped that you will respond to these questions so that we can develop the Area Action Plan together to create the best possible developments for Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

### **Key issues:**

This document poses a number of questions about a wide variety of issues for the Yarm and Eaglescliffe area. The questions have emerged from a number of sources, including officers of the Council, local residents and town and parish Councillors. The most important focus around the following issues:

- Overall vision for the future development of Yarm and Eaglescliffe.
- Where should the boundary of the Area Action Plan be drawn?
- Major schemes in the pipeline
- Tourism and visitor facilities
- Maintaining and enhancing the residential areas
- Strengthening Yarm’s role as a commercial centre
- Protection of the historic areas
- Traffic and parking
- Green spaces
- Potential development sites

### **Have we got all the Key Issues? What other issues are there?**

#### **Overall vision for the area.**

The Council is interested in how you see Yarm and Eaglescliffe developing in the future. The Council’s Local Development Framework is intended to look forward 15 years or more into the future.

Q1. How do you envisage Yarm and Eaglescliffe in 2022?

Q2 Where are the areas for change and which parts should remain the same?

Q3 How do you think this vision can be achieved?

#### **Where should the boundary of Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan be drawn?**

The LDS state that the plan will cover the built up area of Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

Q4. Where do you think the boundary should be drawn?

Q5. Should the villages of Aislaby and Kirklevington be included?

**Major schemes in the pipeline**

As mentioned above, there is a range of plans, projects and strategies being prepared which will result in some development taking place. Most schemes will require some formal consultation, but it could be useful to build the framework for these projects to ease the way for them to be implemented. Therefore, we would like your comments and suggestions about the following projects: consider their impact, their suitability, location and likely effects. Also consider what you would like to see as part of these developments to reduce their impact or to maximise their potential.

- Memorial Garden development at Egglecliffe War Memorial
- Preston Museum improvements
- Preston Park facilities improvement
- The Heritage park on the Tees Corridor between Egglecliffe and Ingleby Barwick
- Tall Trees
- Former Campbell's Garage, Yarm High Street

**Tourism and visitor facilities**

Yarm has a long history as a market town and port, and Egglecliffe has the railway heritage, but neither is particularly well equipped for tourism. The opening of the new Town Hall centre in Yarm in the coming year will assist, but there is little else specifically to attract tourists and visitors. Significantly, there is little made of the original Stockton-Darlington Line that runs through the area. There is much to see and do in the area, and Yarm specifically has an established niche shopping area, historic buildings and access to the river, as well as an established nightlife.

Both Yarm and Egglecliffe have attractive semi-rural settings as they are sandwiched between the open countryside and the Green Wedge, with the Tees meandering through. However access to rural leisure opportunities is limited, and the river is barely used.

Preston Park and Museum is the most popular visitor destination in the Tees Valley. The Council is shortly to bid for funding to develop new visitor attractions and to refurbish the existing offer. Studies have been undertaken to look at the feasibility of a variety of schemes.

Q6: Is there a need for new toilets in Yarm? Where could they go?

Q7: Should Preston Park be the focus of all tourism in the Borough? What facilities could the museum and/or Park include?

Q8: What other tourism facilities should be promoted and where?

Q9: Has Yarm got the right mix of shops, pubs and houses? Are there any uses missing in Yarm?

Q10: With the new rail link between Sunderland and London, is there scope to develop more visitor facilities at Egglecliffe? Where, and what?

Q11: Should more be made of the River Tees for leisure e.g. through boat hire – where would they be accessed? Are more moorings needed?

### **Maintaining and enhancing the residential areas**

There has been a lot of interest over the last few years regarding residential development in established areas. Arguments against such development include the loss of character, and arguments for include widening choice of dwellings. There have been a lot of schemes of varying quality, but recently there have been fewer applications as sites become scarce. The Council has an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance document dealing with locating and designing apartments, and there are policies within the Local Plan to direct other forms of development. Therefore the small amount of development that has or is taking place has generally been successful.

Nevertheless, there remain a variety of reasons for significant opposition to change, and there must be some common ground sought to allow appropriate development to take place and to restrict inappropriate development.

Q12: What type of housing is needed over the coming years?

Q12: Where are new houses needed?

Q14: Should there be a Design Code agreed for any future development in suburban areas? Or is there another solution?

Q.16. Would a design competition help raise the standard of design in new developments?

Q17: Should we give protection to mature vegetation, not just to trees with Preservation Orders?

### **Strengthening Yarm's role as a commercial centre**

Yarm has always been a trading town since its inception as the lowest fording point on the Tees, half way between Durham and York. Although it no longer holds a regular market, there is still a flurry of commercial activity that keeps the local economy alive. Niche shopping and a vibrant nightlife make Yarm famous across the North East, but the demands of business must be balanced with the needs of residents.

Q18: What can be done to make Yarm more competitive against other market towns?

Q19: How can businesses be allowed to expand without detriment to residential amenity?

Q20: Should we allow more mobile masts to improve radio and mobile telephone reception? Where could they be sited to prevent harm to the Conservation Area?

### **Protection of the historic areas**

Yarm and Eaglescliffe both have extensive historic assets. The best of these are incorporated in three Conservation Areas: Yarm, Egglecliffe, and Eaglescliffe With Preston, although this is not to say that the rest is not worthy of protection or enhancement. The 2007 Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Folder sets out detailed information about all aspects of the historic environment, and includes guidance on owning and/or developing in established areas. This is sufficient to



meet the requirements of English Heritage, and also for the Council to perform its function as Planning Authority.

However, some argue that this is not sufficient, and that piecemeal erosion of the historic fabric is slowly robbing the area of its appeal. On top of this, and closely tied to the tourism potential mentioned above, some of the key historic elements of the area are forgotten or ignored and should be given their due consideration.

Some additional work is shortly to be undertaken (in a different consultation) about strengthening interest in, and control of, the historic environment through the review of Article 4 Directions (the removal of permitted development rights) and through a Local List of important Buildings worthy of protection. Consultation will begin on these in due course, however any comments upon these proposals are welcome here too. (For more information about the historic environment, look at [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) or in your local library for the "Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Folder". You can also ring the Historic Buildings Officer on 01642 526022)

Q21: Are there any buildings, structures or features that should be on the Local List?

Q22: Do you think that there should be additional controls on development in the Conservation Areas or that there is already enough control to prevent inappropriate development?

Q23: What development could improve understanding of, or access to, the historic environment?

Q24: Are there any historic features that are in danger of being lost? How could we secure their future?

Q25: What else could be done to improve or protect the historic areas?

Q26: Is the Yarm/Eaglescliffe area reaching its environmental capacity to absorb further development? (that is, the point at which further development will begin to detract from the quality/ characteristics of the area which contribute towards its attractions)

### **Transport and parking**

Statistics show that the level of traffic in Yarm High Street has not grown significantly in the last 20 years, but the type of traffic using the High Street has changed considerably – for example, delivery lorries are much larger – giving the impression of increased traffic. As a main road, it is unfortunate that the parking areas are directly off the highway, which means that progress can be slow when there is a lot of parking activity. There is also a conflict between the needs of commuters', shoppers' and residents' parking needs, and given the limited land availability it is difficult to solve.

Public transport is reasonably good between Yarm and Stockton, but further afield can necessitate changing buses or indirect routes. There is also the issue that buses are often stuck in the same queues as the cars, and therefore it is no quicker using public transport.

The proposed new rail link between Sunderland and London is likely to bring additional opportunities for commuting and holidays, and as the only stop in Teesside

is Eaglescliffe, there will be issues surrounding connections to other trains, buses and also for parking. There is also the fact that the station is not particularly attractive, especially at night.

Q27: Should parking in Yarm be re-prioritised to give more help to commuters, residents or short stay shoppers?

Q28: Is 2 hours enough for short stay?

Q29: Is there a need for additional parking? Who should it be for? Where could it go? Could land under the viaduct be considered for parking? What about safety issues there?

Q30. Should disabled parking be re-sited?

Q31. How can the effect of lorries be controlled, for example imposing loading and weight restrictions or a no right turn, given that the High Street is a major road? Will improvements on the A66 enable lorries to be restricted through Yarm town centre?

Q32. Could through traffic and traffic seeking parking be separated in some way to assist traffic flow?

Q33. Would a park and ride link for Eaglescliffe station improve rail patronage? If so, where could it be located? Would land west of the station be suitable?

Q34: What can be done to encourage more use of the bus service? Could routes be extended to take in Eaglescliffe rail station?

Q35. Should the link between the station and the Kingsmead Estate be re-instated?

Q36: Are there locations that could benefit from lower or higher speed limits?

Q37: Are there adequate pedestrian crossings across main roads? What else can be done to improve pedestrian safety on the roads?

Q38: Are there any places where pedestrian and cycle access should be created?

Q39: Is there scope for additional bus lanes? Where?

Q40: Should there be parking control in Station Road, Eaglescliffe? How should it be organised?

Q41: Where could improved cycle and footpath links be provided to aid safety and promote sustainable transport?

### **Green Spaces and Recreational Facilities.**

Yarm and Eaglescliffe have a wide variety of green spaces of varying types, often much more than is thought. However, the type and distribution of these spaces is often the cause of concern. The two main issues are play spaces, and the inappropriate use of small areas where ball games cause problems, and the threat of development of open spaces, particularly in the Green Wedge and on the edge of the settlements.

Often access to open spaces is the determining factor for whether a site is used or not, particularly where there are roads to cross or poorly maintained paths.

There is also concern over the future of a number of parcels of land that have no formal planning status, but are valued as open spaces.

Q42: What types of open spaces are missing or limited? Where could these be sited?

Q43: Are the open spaces given the right maintenance?

Q44: How can access to open spaces be improved? Particularly to the Heritage Park in the Tees corridor between Eaglescliffe and Ingleby Barwick, and also to Preston Park?

Q45: Should the sites with no formal allocation be given recognition as green space or for development, or for something else?

Q46: Are the allotments needed anymore? Are there alternative uses for them?

Q47: How can open spaces be improved in other ways?

Q48: What sport and other recreational facilities are lacking in the area?

### **Development Sites**

There are a number of development sites still available throughout Yarm and Eaglescliffe, and these vary in size, type and potential uses. A number of these are listed below, but in no way is it exhaustive as sites can come forward at any time. A coordinated approach to these sites will allow a more comprehensive range of developments to take place in a joined up manner.

This is not just about house building – it covers all types of development – even something like building a school, or just erecting a fence.

Development is inevitable and should be encouraged otherwise places will stagnate, but it should be done sensitively to reduce the impact of change. There will always be conflicts whenever development is proposed, but a clear and co-ordinated vision or framework will assist in making sure that everyone can agree a positive way forward.

Q49: The following sites all have some potential for development. What comments do you have on these? Please consider the impact of development, the types of land uses that could be incorporated there, design and layout of development etc? Whether development could or should take place.

- The former Navy Stores, (also known as Allen's West, Eaglescliffe Logistics Centre, or Cenargo).
- Land underneath Yarm Viaduct
- Land once occupied by the pylons

Q50: Are there any other sites that could be considered for development? What could be developed there?

Q51: Are there any sites that should not be considered for development?

Q52: Is there a common theme that development could follow – such as a design style, or agreed use? Could this be specific to Yarm and Eaglescliffe, or could they have separate ones?

Q53: What types of development should be encouraged?

Q54: What types of development should be discouraged?

Q55: Sometimes development that is acceptable in principle is strongly opposed by local people. What can be done to agree a common way forward in such circumstances?

Q56: Are there any standards or guidelines that could be made to make developments less likely to be so indiscriminate?

Q57: Can the character of the area be defined easily or is the area too varied to define easily?

### **Get involved**

This document will help to shape the way YOUR environment develops, so if you care about it, let us know what you think.

Simply print off the consultation sheet from [www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning) and send it to us at the address below, or even easier, fill the consultation sheet in and e-mail it to us at [isabel.nicholls@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:isabel.nicholls@stockton.gov.uk)

If you don't have access to a computer, telephone us on the number below and we will send you a consultation sheet to fill in, or you can collect a sheet from your local library.

### **Stay informed about this document and other planning documents**

You can be kept informed of the progress on this document and other planning issues by any of the following means:

- Look at the Council's website: [www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning),
- Monitor the local press
- Joining our mailing list

For more information about this or other planning policy issues, contact the Spatial Planning Section on:

- 01642 526022,
- Spatial Planning Section, Stockton Borough Council, Gloucester House, Church Road, Stockton, TS18 4LN
- Or email [isabel.nicholls@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:isabel.nicholls@stockton.gov.uk),

### **What happens next?**

The comments and suggestions received from this process will be taken forward and a Preferred Options paper prepared which will set out the way the document will develop in terms of content. This will be put out for consultation so you will have additional chance to make comments.

As the document develops, you will have further chance to make comments on it, including, if it becomes necessary, at a Public Inquiry. This will ensure that the document is transparent and fair.

Ultimately the document will be adopted as a Planning Development Plan Document, which will be used in determining planning applications.