



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Issues and Options Consultation

**Stockton-on-Tees Borough
Local Development Framework**

September 2010

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Introduction

1. *What is the Environment Development Plan Document?*

The Environment Development Plan Document (DPD) is an important part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will deliver those aspects of the Core Strategy policies CS1 The Spatial Strategy, CS3 Sustainable Living and Climate Change, CS4 Economic Regeneration, CS6 Community Facilities and CS10 Environmental Protection and Enhancement and assist in achieving the following Core Strategy Objectives:

- Objective 1: To enable all of Stockton Borough's residents to live in prosperous, cohesive, and sustainable communities.
- Objective 5: To ensure good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities, goods and services within the Borough, and to improve links to other areas of the Tees Valley and beyond.
- Objective 6: To provide high quality services and facilities to meet the needs of the Borough's growing and ageing population, with emphasis on improving the health of the Borough's population, in terms of health care, education and training, together with sport, leisure, recreation and cultural pursuits.
- Objective 8: To protect and enhance the Borough's natural environment and to promote the creation, extension and better management of green infrastructure and biodiversity, taking advantage of the Borough's special qualities and location at the mouth of the River Tees.
- Objective 9: To protect and enhance the built environment and the area's archaeological, industrial and cultural heritage.
- Objective 10: To ensure better use of resources, particularly the re-use of previously developed land.
- Objective 11: To provide a safe, healthy and attractive environment.

The report details an overarching approach to delivering green infrastructure and mitigating against and adapting to the affects of climate change. With the following four main themes providing the main content of the report:

- THEME 1** **Natural Environment** – planning policies on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- THEME 2** **Historic Environment** – policies on the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement, of the built heritage within the Borough.
- THEME 3** **Rural Environment** – policies on rural character and diversification
- THEME 4** **Urban Open Space** – policies on the strategic management of green spaces throughout the Borough

When reading the report it is important to remember that the overarching approach and themes within this report are very much inter-related. There are many cross cutting topics and many of the evidence base documents appropriate for a number of themes.

2. *What is the purpose of the issues and options consultation?*

This issues and options paper details issues affecting the natural, historic and rural environment of Stockton-on-Tees Borough and invites the public and stakeholders to make comments on which options they feel are most appropriate for dealing with these issues.

The issues and options paper presents the chance to consider how different policy options might deliver or hinder those broader local community priorities and test whether those choices fit well with national policy and guidance.

One of the main purposes of producing this document is to encourage people to become more involved throughout the process of producing the Environment DPD. Our detailed approach for involving people in producing Local Development Documents is set out in our Statement of Community Involvement. We are inviting your views, which will be important to us, since we need to know how you would like the shape and protect the built, natural, historic and rural environment of Stockton-on-Tees Borough.

3. *How will the document integrate with other planning policy?*

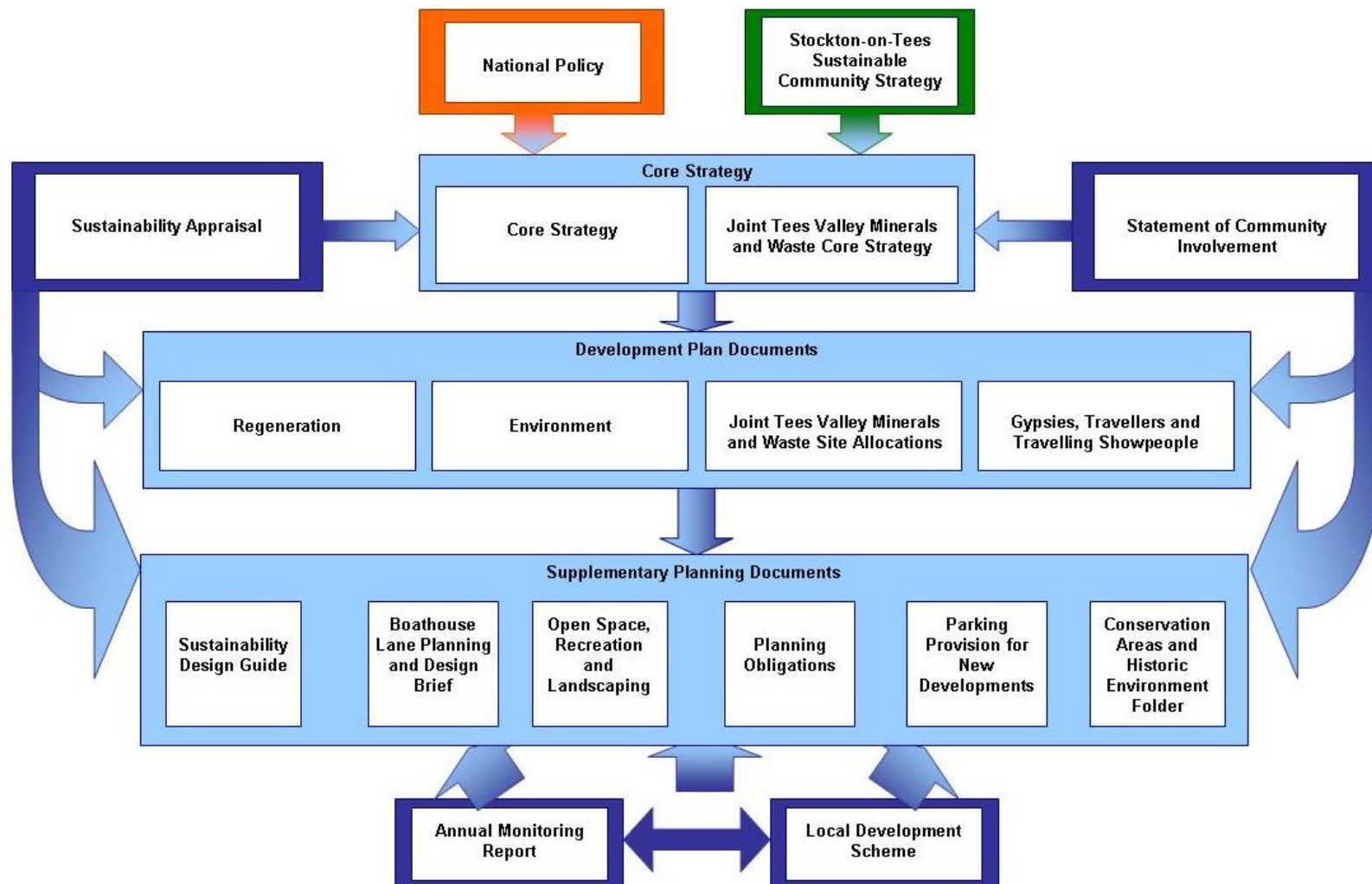
The issues and options in this document have been significantly influenced by national policy requirements. However, a key principle of the LDF system is that documents should not merely repeat existing guidance. Therefore the development of options has given careful consideration not to repeat Planning Policy Statements and circulars published by Communities and Local Government (CLG) as well as the Stockton on Tees Borough Core Strategy.

4. *How does the document fit in to the Local Development Framework?*

The LDF is a series of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents which make up the Development Plan for Stockton-on-Tees Borough. The Core Strategy, the overarching strategic document which sets out the development strategy for the Borough, was adopted in March 2010. The Environment DPD provides site specific designations and guidance which adds more detail to the strategic policies set out in the Core Strategy.

In order for the Environment DPD to be considered a sound document, it must be in broad conformity with the policies set out nationally and those in the Core Strategy, as well as a number of “tests of soundness” set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12).

Figure 1: Documents that make up the Borough's Local Development Framework



5. *What is the evidence base for this document?*

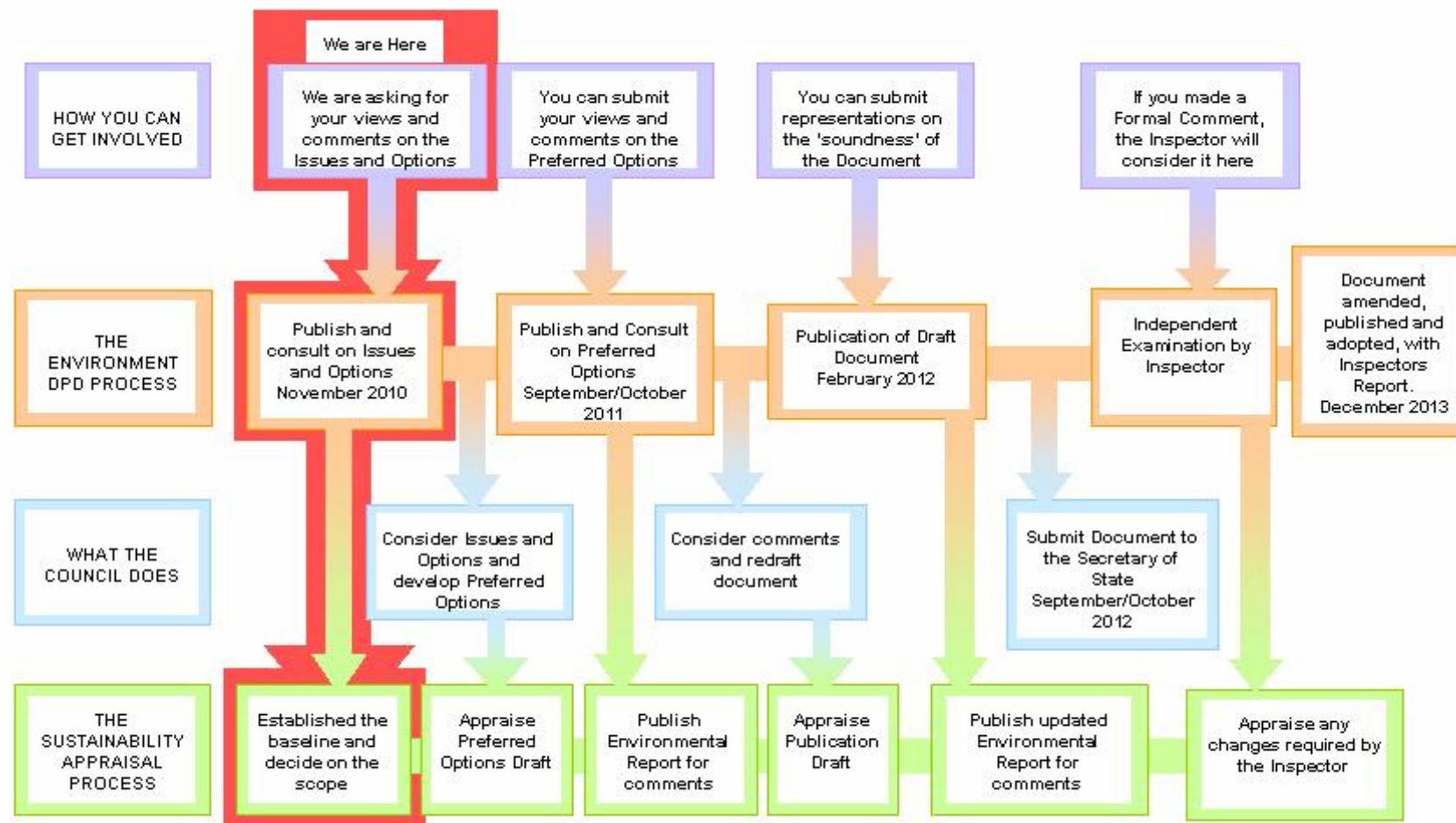
The Evidence Base is the information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in Local Development Documents (LDD). All LDDs will need to be founded on an up to date and robust evidence base.

A number of studies are under development or have been completed by the Council, or by consultants acting on its behalf, to provide the essential background information that will assist in the preparation of the Environment DPD. Documents which make up the evidence base for the Environment DPD are listed within the supporting text for each theme.

6. *When will the document be adopted by the Council?*

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the preparation of the documents that comprise the LDDs that will collectively comprise the Borough wide Local Development Framework. The Issues and Options stage is the first stage in the process. There are a number of further stages with the scheduled adoption date for the Environment DPD being December 2013.

Figure 2: How the Environment DPD is being prepared



7. How to Comment

The issues and options paper presents the chance to consider how different policy options might deliver or hinder broader local community priorities and test whether those choices fit well with national policy and guidance. It is important that you let the Council have your views on which options you consider are the most appropriate for Stockton Borough. Consultees are also welcomed to identify additional issues and options for consideration.

This is the first stage of the consultation process. The views of the local community and other statutory consultees will be taken into account to produce what we think are the preferred range of policies and proposals for the future of our built, natural, historic and rural environment. A consultation period of 6 weeks will now be given for people to make formal representation on the Issues and Options Report. The 6-week period is from XX November to XX December. Following this consultation, the Council will prepare the Preferred Options document, taking into account any comments received at the Issues and Options Stage. A further opportunity to comment will take place following the completion of the Preferred Options Report.

You can make comments on the Environment DPD in the following ways:

Online- You can download the response questionnaire at www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning.

By email

You can email your response questionnaire to us at:
spatialplans@stockton.gov.uk

By post

Response questionnaires are available from Planning Services Reception, libraries and online. If you would like a comment form posting to you, please call 01642 526197.

8. Supporting Documents

The Issues and Options Report is supported by the **Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report** required by EU Directive EC/2001/42.

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report records the process of deciding on the scope and level of detail for the Sustainability Appraisal of emerging Development Plan Documents that will make up the Local Development Framework. This will be a tool to be used to appraise the emerging Local Development Framework proposals and policies using the ten Sustainability Appraisal objectives that reflect the key sustainability issues within the Borough.

The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report was adopted in July 2010, following consultation in April 2009 with the three statutory bodies, English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency, and selected organisations with social, economic or environmental responsibilities.

The EC Habitats directive Articles 6.3 and 6.4 requires that all plans and projects, not directly connected to or necessary for the management of sites designated as of European importance for their nature conservation value, are assessed for their likely impacts upon these sites. The Council carried out a **Habitats Regulation Assessment** of the Core Strategy Preferred Options in September 2007, which was then updated for Publication and for Submission in May 2009. This assessed the impacts of the Core Strategy upon sites designated as of European importance for their nature conservation value and within or around the Borough boundary.

The policy options of the Environment DPD will be screened to determine whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. The results of the screening process will then determine whether an appropriate assessment of the plans effects on the integrity of the site is required. It will also be used to inform the development of preferred options.

Later stages of the Environment DPD will be supported by the following documents:

- Consultation Statement, outlining the consultation processes undertaken in the preparation of the Environment DPD; and
- Infrastructure Strategy, which sets out how and when proposals will be implemented, funding sources and responsibility for projects.

Overarching Approach: Green Infrastructure and Climate Change

Introduction

Climate Change and the development of Green Infrastructure are key issues. This importance is highlighted within policies CS3 and CS10 of the Core Strategy as well as within national policy. To an extent these topics are interrelated, with the development of Green Infrastructure helping to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Similarly these topics are related to the remaining themes within the report.

Having Green Infrastructure and Climate Change as an overarching approach in the Environment DPD is intended to highlight the importance of these topics through the remainder of the themes and how they have been included within other Local Development Documents (LDD). Issues and options within the other Themes of this report will develop upon these topics.

Green Infrastructure

What is Green Infrastructure?

The consultation paper on a new PPS 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' is keen to instil the importance of Green Infrastructure and defines it as:

'...a strategic network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities. It delivers a broad range of functions and provides vital socio-economic and cultural benefits, which underpin individual and community health and well-being. These functions include: conserving and enhancing the natural environment; providing wildlife corridors; reducing noise and air pollution; and helping communities to adapt to a changing climate through water and carbon management. In urban areas, functions include providing routes (e.g. footpaths and cycleways) which link areas of open space within settlements; providing sustainable drainage, flood storage and urban cooling; and providing a wide range of opportunities for engagement and active citizenship, relaxation and quiet contemplation, sport, recreation and children's play.'

The green infrastructure concept provides a way of viewing open space provision as a resource that should be planned strategically and delivered in an integrated way across the Tees Valley. Green infrastructure provision should form an integral part of the investment plans and strategies of those agencies with a remit for the planning and delivery of growth, sustainable development, and environmental management.

Core Strategy policy CS10 states that 'joint working with partners and developers will ensure the successful creation of an integrated network of green infrastructure'. The Environment DPD will develop upon the provisions within CS10 to establish the roles

partners and developers will play in creating an integrated green infrastructure network.

Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy

The Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy aims to:

- Provide a strategic context for the sustainable planning and management of existing and proposed green space in the Tees Valley
- Support and reinforce initiatives and strategies designed to raise the economic performance of the Tees Valley, promote economic and social inclusion, create sustainable communities, and improve the environment
- Provide a framework of green corridors and spaces that will help to improve access to open space for local communities and contribute to tackling issues such as poor health and quality of life.
- Provide an enhanced environmental context for new development and regeneration schemes
- Improve access to resources through major funding regimes and improve the case for green infrastructure to be funded as a primary public investment on a similar basis to other services and infrastructure.

Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy

The Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a framework for the future development and management of the Borough's green infrastructure. It aims to enhance our environment and to maximise the contribution it makes to people's well-being and quality of life. It also looks ahead to the challenges facing the Borough and shows how we can begin to meet some of those challenges through the way we plan and manage green infrastructure - helping to adapt to climate change and contributing to the on-going regeneration of Stockton-on-Tees.

Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out the following vision:

A well-developed Green Infrastructure Network covering all parts of the Borough:

- *providing a diverse, rich, locally distinctive, high quality environment;*
- *promoting enjoyment, health and well-being;*
- *making a significant contribution to the regeneration of Stockton-on-Tees and the wider Tees Valley.*

We will achieve this by working in partnership, helping people to shape their local environment and by conserving and enhancing landscapes, heritage and wildlife.

We wish to see significant improvements in the short-term, but our overall ambitions are long-term and will benefit not only those who live and work in the Borough today but also future generations.

The Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy aims to achieve this vision by focusing on 11 key themes.

Existing Green Infrastructure Resource

The Borough's urban and rural landscapes and all the individual greenspaces and other environmental features make up the overall green infrastructure resource.

At the Borough or Tees Valley scale some areas and features are particularly significant. This includes landscape character areas, landscape features such as green wedges and river corridors, and 'destination sites' such as urban and country parks and major wildlife sites. Some of the main areas and features of the green infrastructure resource are shown in Appendix 1. The map highlights the significance of the Borough's river corridors, which incorporate a number of wildlife and landscape features, and the importance of green wedges which help to prevent coalescence of settlements. All these corridors provide access to local greenspace and countryside, and connect too many of the Borough's key 'destination sites'.

Green Infrastructure Network

The Green Infrastructure Strategy proposes a hierarchy of green infrastructure corridors and local 'green grids', forming an integrated network across the whole Borough. This network comprises three tiers:

- 'Primary' green infrastructure network: a series of corridors identified through the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008) and of significance up to the sub-regional scale.
- 'Secondary' green infrastructure network: corridors identified as part of this Strategy and of significance up to the Borough scale.
- Urban and rural 'green grids': local green networks of particular significance at the neighbourhood scale.

The Primary and secondary corridors are shown in Appendix 2. Both at the Tees Valley and Borough scale these corridors are largely based on existing green corridors, but in some areas these corridors are more 'aspirational' and the linkages shown are indicative - to be achieved as and when opportunities arise, e.g. linked to future development. The urban and rural 'green grids' are not mapped at the Borough-scale, but could be mapped locally.

Delivery of this green infrastructure network will be achieved through the following approaches:

- maintaining existing green infrastructure features and assets;
- developing and enhancing existing green infrastructure features and assets; for example, by changing the way existing areas are managed to perform additional functions and deliver wider benefits; and
- creating new high quality green infrastructure, helping to deliver a more integrated, well-connected green infrastructure network.

A detailed Action Plan accompanies this Green Infrastructure Strategy, setting out in detail how partners will work towards developing the green infrastructure network.

Climate Change

What is Climate Change?

The term climate change relates to the variation in the Earth's climate over a number of years and has occurred historically as a result of processes within the earth and

fluctuations in external forces i.e. the sun. The Stern review, published in 2006, undertook a significant level of research, which made it clear that there is now strong and indisputable evidence, that climate change is occurring and that human activity rather than nature is the cause.

The Local Perspective

It is anticipated that as a result of climate change the UK could experience more extreme weather events including hotter and drier summers with flooding and rising sea levels. This could significantly impact on both the built and natural environment in the borough as a number of important habitats and historic settlements are situated in areas that may be vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Stockton Borough Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in November 2002 and has adopted a Climate Change Action Plan.

Stockton Borough Climate Change Action Plan 2009-2020

Stockton Borough Council's Climate Change Action Plan seeks to make a contribution towards meeting target set at a national and global level. It sets a challenge for the community on what is undoubtedly the biggest issue we are facing today.

The key aims of this action plan are:

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions from within the Stockton Borough Council area through reducing energy use, better waste management, the use of sustainable transport and green procurement.
- To raise awareness of the factors which cause climate change.
- To involve communities and encourage them to take necessary actions to tackle climate change.
- To provide a framework to adapt to the inevitable impacts from climate change.
- To demonstrate the social, economic and environmental benefits of taking climate change actions.

The action plan identifies the actions that are needed to respond to the threat of climate change. These include:

- actions for adapting to the effects of climate change
- objectives for carbon reduction in the area

Climate Change and Spatial Planning

At the heart of the spatial planning system is the principle of sustainable development. The most commonly used definition of sustainable development was included in the report of the Brundtland commission titled "Our Common Future" (1987). This states that, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The threat of climate change will clearly affect future generations and it is imperative that action is taken now to mitigate the potential impacts and adapt to the changing circumstances.

Friends of the Earth highlight the role major and positive contribution LDFs can make in meeting this challenge through promoting policies which reduce the threat of climate change by:

- Promoting the highest standards of resource and energy efficiency in new development so as to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions arising from construction and use
- Requiring land-use patterns that reduce the need and the propensity to travel by car
- Vigorously promoting small and large scale renewable energy projects
- Restricting development which has a major negative impact on CO2 emissions
- Adapting to the harmful impacts of climate change.

(Friends of the Earth: Tackling climate change at the local level the role of local development frameworks in reducing the emissions of new developments, Nov 2005).

Planning Policy

Government guidance in the draft Planning and Climate Change supplement to PPS1 identifies that effective spatial planning is one of the many components required to respond effectively to climate change issues and that spatial planning has a pivotal and significant role in helping:

- Secure enduring progress against the UK's emissions targets, by direct influence on energy use and emissions, and in bringing together and encouraging action by others;
- Deliver the Government's ambition of zero carbon development;
- Shape sustainable communities that are resilient to the climate change now accepted as inevitable;
- Create an attractive environment for innovation and for the private sector to bring forward investment in renewable and low carbon technologies and supporting infrastructure; and,
- Give local communities real opportunities to influence, and take, action on climate change.

Figure 1 in Section 1 of this report outlines the documents that make up the Borough's Local Development Framework. There are three documents that alongside the Environment DPD have a key role to play in making a positive contribution towards reducing the threat of climate change:

- **Core Strategy DPD**- overarching strategic document which sets out the development strategy for the Borough, was adopted in March 2010
- **Regeneration DPD**- site specific allocations for land uses, development policies relating to, employment, retail, renewable energy development, mixed use developments, transport, regeneration and all land uses affected by , or affecting modes and patterns of transport.
- **Sustainability Design Guide SPD**- guidance on the sustainable design and layout of new development. It is intended that the document will provide greater detail on Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy which aims to reduce the environmental impacts of development

The Council's Core Strategy seeks to make a contribution to addressing the issue of climate change, with policies focusing on:

Core Strategy policy CS1: The Spatial Strategy

- 'In general, new development will be located within the conurbation, to assist with reducing the need to travel.
- Priority will be to previously developed land in the Core Area to meet the Borough's housing requirement'.

Core Strategy policy CS2: Sustainable Transport and Travel

- Accessibility will be improved and transport choice widened, by ensuring all new development is well serviced by an attractive choice of transport modes.
- Improvements to public transport and proposals and the road network will be supported.

Core Strategy policy CS3: Sustainable Living and Climate Change

- All new residential development will achieve a minimum of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes up to 2013, and thereafter a minimum of Code Level 4.
- All new non-residential developments will be completed to a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) of 'very good' up to 2013 and thereafter a minimum rating of 'excellent'.
- The minimum carbon reduction targets will remain in line with Part L of the Building Regulations, achieving carbon neutral domestic properties by 2016, and non domestic properties by 2019, although it is expected that developers will aspire to meet targets prior to these dates.
- To meet carbon reduction targets, energy efficiency measures should be embedded in all new buildings. If this is not possible, or the targets are not met, then on-site district renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be used. Where it can be demonstrated that neither of these options is suitable, micro renewable, micro carbon energy technologies or a contribution towards an off-site renewable energy scheme will be considered.
- For all major developments, including residential developments comprising 10 or more units, and non-residential developments exceeding 1000 square metres gross floor space, at least 10% of total predicted energy requirements will be provided, on site, from renewable energy sources.
- All major development proposals will be encouraged to make use of renewable and low carbon decentralised energy systems to support the sustainable development of major growth locations within the Borough.
- Where suitable proposals come forward for medium to small scale renewable energy generation, which meet the criteria set out in Policy 40 of the Regional Spatial Strategy, these will be supported.
- In designing new development, proposals will:
 - Make a positive contribution to the local area;
 - Be designed with safety in mind, incorporating Secure by Design and Park Mark standards, as appropriate;
 - Incorporate 'long life and loose fit' buildings, allowing buildings to be adaptable to changing needs. By 2013, all new homes will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards;
 - Seek to safeguard the diverse cultural heritage of the Borough
- The reduction, reuse, sorting, recovery and recycling of waste will be encouraged, and details will be set out in the Joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents.

Core Strategy policy CS10: Environmental Protection and Enhancement

- New development will be directed towards areas of low flood risk, that is Flood Zone 1, as identified in the Borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). In considering sites elsewhere, the sequential and exceptions tests

will be applied, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, and applicants will be expected to carry out a flood risk assessment.

Land use allocations within the Regeneration DPD must be in accordance with the sustainability principles set out within the Core Strategy. The Regeneration DPD may also identify broad locations for renewable energy generation. Therefore, policy in the Environment DPD should not repeat these policies.

Policies contained within the LDF are consistent with national policy and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. However, it is considered that the Environment DPD has a role to play in mitigating and adapting to the effect of climate change.

Recent government policy development has promoted the production of surface water management plans (SWMPs). The Council will be undertaking a SWMP which will be useful tool for:

- assessing the risk of surface water flooding;
- identifying options to manage risk to acceptable level;
- making the right investment decisions; and
- planning the delivery of actions to manage flood risk.

Green Infrastructure solutions can play a key role in preventing and mitigating flooding and making space for water and slowing the rate of surface water run off.

THEME 1- Natural Environment (planning policies on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment)

Introduction

Background and Principles

The decline and loss of habitats and biodiversity, both on land and in water, is a recognised problem in the UK and affects a range of sites from those of international importance to those of local significance. Such sites are under threat from a range of pressures including development, changes in land management practices and the effects of climate change. These pressures are increasingly resulting in habitat fragmentation that may in turn lead to the reduced viability and further loss of habitat, as well as hampering the migration of species. The need to conserve and protect the habitats underlines the importance of ensuring future development is achieved within known biophysical limits.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) act (2006) states that, “ every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. The act specifies that, “conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.” The intention of this biodiversity duty is to help ensure that biodiversity becomes a natural consideration in the development of policies and that the development of policies and decisions of public bodies work with the grain of nature and not against it. Part of the purpose of this section of the Environment DPD is to provide policies related to the conservation of biodiversity along with the important geodiversity assets within the borough.

Stockton’s Natural Environment

Stockton has a rich and diverse natural environment with the borough containing numerous designated sites of international, national and local importance. The borough has a strategic network of multifunctional green spaces. However, there is the potential for conflict between the natural environment and current/future land uses. It is therefore essential that the LDF satisfactorily manages development to ensure it does not harm the natural environment and where possible enhances it.

Specific designated sites within the borough include:

- **Sites of International Importance-** Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site
- **Sites of National Importance**
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):
 - i. Seal Sands
 - ii. Cowpen Marsh
 - iii. Whitton Bridge Pasture
 - iv. Briarcroft Pasture
 - v. Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands
 - Teesmouth National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- **Sites of Local Importance**
 - Country Parks:
 - i. Wynyard Woodland Park, Thorpe Thewles

- ii. Billingham Beck Valley Country Park
- iii. Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR):
 - i. Bassleton Woods and the Holmes, Thornaby
 - ii. Barwick Pond, Ingleby Barwick
 - iii. Black Bobby's Field, Thornaby
 - iv. Billingham Beck Valley Country Park
 - v. Charlton's Pond, Billingham
 - vi. Greenvale, Stockton
 - vii. Hardwick Dene and Elm Tree Wood, Stockton
 - viii. Norton Marsh, Stockton
 - ix. Quarry Wood, Eaglescliffe
 - x. Stillington Forest Park
 - xi. Thorpe Wood, near Thorpe Thewles
- Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves
 - i. Bowesfield
 - ii. Gravel Hole
 - iii. Maze Park (partly in Middlesbrough)
 - iv. Portrack Marsh
 - v. Preston Farm
- Local Wildlife and Geodiversity Sites- 58 sites

In addition to the above RSPB Saltholme was opened in 2009 as a major new nature reserve and discovery park. The site covers some 380 hectares of former industrial land and comprises a great variety of wildlife habitats including reedbeds wet grasslands and lakes. Saltholme attracts a vast array of birds and other wildlife, including wildlife and has the third largest common tern colony in England. It has a new state-of-the-art visitor centre and a series of trails extending across the site.

Trees and Woodland form an essential part of the natural environment helping to mitigate against climate change (carbon sinks), improving air quality and quality of life. In total there are 360 hectares of woodland within the Borough with the major sites including:

- Coatham Wood, Long Newton
- Honey Pot Wood, Whitton
- Wynyard Woodlands
- Leven Valley woodlands

The Borough also contains a number of ancient woodlands. These are areas of land that have been continually wooded since at least AD1600. They form an irreplaceable asset owing to their contribution to the landscape, their historic form, and their nature conservation value.

The Council currently has an active programme of annual tree planting typically planting up to 3-400 new street trees every year. Trees are also an equally important aspect of the urban environment and it is important that the role of trees within the public realm is fully embedded within policy. The Council will be producing a Tree and Woodland Strategy, which will plan for the overall management of all trees and woodland throughout the Borough.

Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, 10 new Inshore Fisheries and Conservation districts have been established to replace the 12 existing Sea Fisheries Committees. Stockton-on-Tees Borough is included within the North Eastern Inshore

Fisheries and Conservation Authority (ICFA) which will 'lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry'.

Relevant Planning Policy

The national policy approach for the natural environment that Local Planning Authorities must adhere to is detailed in PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation'. The consultation paper on a new PPS 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' was proposed to replace PPS9. The issues and options within this report seek to encompass the policy approach advocated within PPS9 and the consultation PPS.

The Core Strategy sets out the overarching development strategy for the Borough. Core Strategy Policy CS10 'Environmental Protection and Enhancement' provides the overarching policy approach for conservation, restoration, enhancement and enjoyment of the natural environment. The provisions within CS10 are summarised below:

- Development (specifically in sensitive areas) will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on statutory designations (either alone or in combination).
- Development will be integrated with the protection, enhancement of biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape.
- Integrity of designated sites will be protected and enhanced in accordance with guidance
- Habitats will be created and managed in line with objectives of the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan
- Joint working to ensure the successful creation on an integrated network of green infrastructure.
- Support initiatives to improve quality of the environment in key areas (where it contributes to strengthening habitat networks, designates sites, tourism offer and biodiversity)
- Development on previously developed land will require assessment to establish the biodiversity and geological conservation value.

The emerging Regeneration and Environment DPDs will develop upon the content of the Core Strategy.

Air and water quality has a direct impact on health, as well as the built and natural environment. Objective 11 of the Core Strategy identifies the aim of reducing pollution to improve air and water quality within the Borough, and continues to identifying the role sustainable drainage systems play in reducing water pollution (amongst other things). PPS23 and its Annex state that policies should seek to reduce the impacts from development on air quality. PPS23 and its Annex aim to ensure that water quality meets the standards that guard against negative impacts to the environment and human health. Whilst it is largely the role of DEFRA and the Environment Agency to oversee water policy, development plans have an important role to play in the mitigation of harmful impacts on water supply and quality (including wastewater infrastructure) as a result of development proposals.

Supporting Documents

EVIDENCE BASE

Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan
Local Wildlife Sites and Justification
Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study

Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan

The Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a response to the national biodiversity planning process. The Tees Valley BAP was produced in 1999 and consists of a series of Species and Habitat Action Plans setting out the current status, targets for protection and enhancement plus the actions to be taken by each partner organisation.

The Tees Valley BAP takes the objectives and targets of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and translates and amplifies them into a Tees Valley context. Focusing on the most significant elements of the Tees Valley's environment, it sets out the actions needed to achieve those objectives and targets.

Biodiversity Action Plans are living documents, regularly reviewed and updated, with targets changed and new ones added in response to the reality of changing conditions on the ground.

Local Wildlife Sites and Justification

Local Sites play a significant role in delivering both UK and Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan targets. They provide a comprehensive suite of sites that give a refuge to most of the UK's fauna and flora and also contribute to the quality of life and the well being of the community, with many sites providing opportunities for research and education.

The Tees Valley Biodiversity Steering Group is the Local Sites Partnership for the Tees Valley (covering the Unitary Authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland). In January 2010 they produced a report detailing the criteria that have been agreed by the Tees Valley Local Sites Partnership for the selection of Local Wildlife Sites. Local Geological Sites are selected by the Tees Valley RIGS (Regionally Important Geologic and Geomorphologic Sites) Group acting as a specialist sub-group of the Local Sites Partnership.

The Local Sites Partnership has selected those sites which are to be classified as Local Wildlife Sites and has submitted them to the Council for inclusion within the Local Development Framework. The Partnership is also responsible for the selection of new sites and de-selection of sites that no longer qualify.

The Issues

- How should the Council set out policies to ensure development will not have adverse effects on statutory designations (either alone or in combination)?
- Should the Council develop a criteria-based policy to judge proposals for development on, or affecting the natural environment?

- How should the Council set out policies to ensure development will be integrated with the protection, enhancement of biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape?
- Should the Council give priority to help achieve the objectives set out in the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan?
- How should the Council set out policies that support the development of a network of green infrastructure?
- Should the Council set out policies to enhance habitat networks, designated sites, tourism offer and biodiversity?
- How should the Council protect and enhance our existing tree stock and develop policies which help to increase tree cover?
- Should the Council ensure development does not adversely impact upon air and water quality?

The Options

Protection and enhancement of sites

In accordance with government guidance Local Planning Authorities should identify on their proposals maps and cross-refer to the statutory protection given to international and national sites.

Option 1

In addition, provide a criteria-based policy to judge proposals for development on or affecting sites of regional and local biodiversity and geodiversity. These being:

- **Local Nature Reserves**
- **Local Wildlife Sites**
- **Regionally Important Geological Sites**

Q1. Is a separate criteria-based policy required for each local and regional designation type?

Q2. Should a criteria based policy be developed for ancient woodland?

Q3. What should the content be of the criteria-based policies?

Q4. Should policies seek to ensure that development is not detrimental to green infrastructure and where possible enhance it?

Option 2

Is the same as option 1, but is expanded to include the identification of key sites/locations for the creation of new habitats and tree cover (in addition these sites may to contribute to creation of multifunctional green spaces, improved connectivity and adaptation to climate changing climate)

Q5. Core Strategy Policy CS10 identifies a commitment to improve various aspects of the natural environment. Should the Environment DPD contain detailed

policies stating how this commitment will be delivered?

There is currently a multitude of documents that seek to detail and identify potential enhancement of the natural environment. These documents include the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and the Stockton Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan. There is also joint working between the Council, RSPB and other partners to prepare a strategic approach to land in and around the SPA/Ramsar site. The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will also outline proposals to manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries.

Q6. Should these documents provide the evidence base for areas of habitat restoration and creation? Are there additional areas that should be considered?

RSPB Saltholme was opened in 2009 as a major new nature reserve and discovery park.

Q7. Should the Environment DPD include a specific policy to protect and support the continued enhancement of the 'nature reserve'?

Core Strategy policy CS10 requires that proposals for the redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed, assessments will be required to establish, amongst other things, the biodiversity and geological conservation value.

Q8. Should the Environment DPD seek to include a specific policy that seeks to retain/incorporate significant locally important biodiversity or geological interest within the redevelopment of previously developed sites?

The restoration of natural floodplains can increase storage capacity, improve the ecological quality of rivers and contribute strongly to the creation of priority habitats such as floodplain grazing marsh. In urban areas there are still opportunities to deliver flood risk management through restoring more natural watercourses in appropriate locations and creating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), which can also be designed to have a high biodiversity value.

Q9. Should the Environment DPD include a policy relating to the restoration of floodplains and natural watercourses in appropriate locations?

Q10. Should the Environment DPD include a policy to ensure that new development does not adversely impact air and water quality?

THEME 2- Historic Environment (policies on the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement, of the built heritage within the Borough)

Introduction

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of the historic environment that hold significance are called heritage assets. As a valuable and irreplaceable asset that is potentially vulnerable to damage and destruction through development and neglect, the historic environment needs to be identified, protected, conserved and enhanced. In addition to their cultural significance the conservation of the historic environment also have social and economic implications and benefits.

The development management policies within PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' are a material consideration that must be taken into account when determining applications affecting the historic environment. Therefore the development management policies in PPS5 can be applied directly by the decision-maker when determining whether development should proceed.

The development management policies within PPS5 cover all heritage assets, this being, the parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. The development management policies cover designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The Environment DPD has the potential to provide a locally distinctive overlay to national planning policy and guidance.

Heritage assets

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in this PPS) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).

Designated heritage assets

Some heritage assets possess a level of interest that justifies designation and particular procedures apply to decisions that involve them. Designated heritage assets include:

- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings
- Protected Wreck Sites
- Registered Park and Gardens,
- Registered Battlefields
- Conservation Areas

Some heritage assets like Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings are designated nationally and have statutory protection whilst others like Conservation Areas, for example, are designated locally. However, it is important to understand that the actual identification and designation of Conservation Areas is not a matter for the development plan. This is a process that is carried out separately under different legislation.

There are a large number of heritage assets in the Borough, including:

- Conservation Areas (11)
 - Billingham Green
 - Bute Street
 - Cowpen Bewley
 - Eaglescliffe
 - Egglecliffe
 - Hartburn
 - Norton
 - Stockton Town Centre
 - Thornaby Green
 - Wolviston
 - Yarm
- Listed Buildings (494)
 - Grade I (7)
 - Grade II* (43)
 - Grade II (444)
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments (8)
 - Castle Hill
 - Grindon Church
 - Barwick Medieval Village
 - Round Hill Castle mound and bailey
 - Larberry Pastures settlement site
 - Newsham Deserted Medieval Village
 - Stockton Market Cross
 - Yarm Bridge
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens (2)
 - Ropner Park
 - Wynyard Park
- Locally listed buildings (47)

Relevant Planning Policy

Government guidance for the protection of all aspects of the historic environment, including archaeology, is set out in detail in PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The Government's overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

Objective 9 and policy CS3 of the Core Strategy make reference to the need to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment leaving more detailed matters relating to the historic environment for consideration in this DPD.

In addition, the Regeneration DPD Preferred Options has identified 10 Character Areas, which have a distinctive character and sense of place. These areas have

been selected on account of their street pattern and/or presence of strong landscape elements that are of high environmental quality. These areas will be supported by a policy within the Regeneration DPD that seeks to preserve their distinctive character.

Supporting Documents

EVIDENCE BASE

SPD4: Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Folder
Historic Landscape Character Assessment
Stockton Heritage Strategy
SPD1: Sustainability Design Guide

Stockton Heritage Strategy

A Heritage Strategy is currently under development for the Borough. There are many local and regional strategies relating to heritage, and activities which celebrate our history, but they are not brought together in any one plan, and there are gaps. The purpose of the overarching Heritage Strategy for the Borough is to pull all this information together and provide a framework for the work of various Council Services, community groups and heritage agencies. The priorities of the Stockton Heritage Strategy are to:

- **Recognise** Stockton's heritage – to understand and know what we have
- **Value** our heritage – and ensure it is preserved
- **Promote** our heritage – and make it accessible and enjoyable
- **Celebrate** our heritage – in all aspects of our lives
- **Resource** our heritage – and create a better future for Stockton's past

The Heritage Strategy is based around five heritage themes:

- Early Stockton, iron-age, Roman and Saxon Stockton
- Railway and engineering heritage including petrochemical industries
- Our World War I and II contribution
- Plaques, trails and interpretation in the landscape
- Recent/Living history and community interest in heritage

SPD4: Conservation and Historic Environment Folder

The SPD was adopted in January 2006 being divided into sections covering all aspects of historic sites, buildings and monuments in the area, and seeks to explain the legislation surrounding them, the role they play within the Borough, and what may be done to maintain them for future generations to enjoy. This included a comprehensive review of conservation areas including the review of boundaries and provision of character area appraisals and management plans.

Historic Landscape Character Assessment

Tees Archaeology are currently undertaking a Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA). The assessment will seek to identify and as far as possible understand the historic development of today's landscape. It will place emphasis on the contribution that past historic processes make to the character of the landscape as a whole, not just selected 'special sites' and can contribute to a wider landscape assessment. This will help to guide decisions on its future change and management.

It is important to ensure that the landscape evolves in a way that leaves it as rich and diverse in the future.

Sustainability Design Guide SPD

The main objectives of the SPD are to encourage vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities, to promote energy efficiency and environmental sustainability and to promote high quality design standards, which have a high regard for the surrounding character of the site and create attractive places to live.

The Issues

- How should the Council protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment?
- Should the Council ensure that development proposals in the historic environment contribute to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?
- How should the Council set out a positive, proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in the Borough?
- Does the existing control over permitted development rights through Article 4 directions, successfully preserve the historic environment?
- Should the Council ensure non designated heritage assets are sufficiently protected?

The Options

Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets

Option 1

Identify designated heritage assets and solely rely upon the development management policies within PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment for proposals affecting all aspects of the historic environment.

Option 2

In addition to the provisions in option 1, identify and provide policy to protect and enhance other heritage assets.

The Regeneration DPD Preferred Options has identified 10 Character Areas, which have a distinctive character and sense of place. These areas will be supported by a policy within the Regeneration DPD which seeks to preserve their distinctive character. The Council has also produced a Local List of buildings of architectural and historical local importance.

Section 4 'Other non-designated sites' of the Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Folder SPD4 identifies:

'One may therefore get the impression that all the other areas in the Borough are somehow less important. This is not the case, as the

Council wishes to protect its entire built heritage through positive management of change, which may include some sympathetic development'.

Q11. Are there any other heritage assets which help characterise and define the Borough and which it is important to conserve in order to maintain its unique sense of place? Possible examples include:

- Historic parks and gardens not included on the English Heritage Register
- Undesignated archaeological assets
- Route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (including its Yarm Branch)

Q12. Is there merit in developing a heritage asset at risk register (whether they are designated or otherwise) and produce a local strategy for the historic environment to tackle these matters?

Option 3

As well as the provisions in options 1 and 2, include a policy relating to the Historic Landscape Assessment to ensure that development is sympathetic to that in the local area.

Article 4 directions

Option 1

Do not alter the current Article 4 directions which are in place

Option 2

Consider the need to extend the use of Article 4 directions

Q13. Does the exercise of permitted development rights undermine the aims of the historic environment? If so in which specific areas?

THEME 3- Rural Environment (policies on rural character and diversification)

Introduction

There are a number of villages surrounding the main conurbation of Stockton. The land between these villages and the conurbation has a plethora of uses and is an important resource that should be protected, managed and enhanced for all those who benefit from it.

The level and nature of development in the countryside as well as other changes in the countryside such as the increased equestrian use and changes to agricultural practices is a concern which is widely expressed in many parts of the country. Some of these matters are controllable directly under planning legislation and others are not.

Development in the countryside is a cross-cutting issues, ranging from landscape designations (see Theme 2), to habitats and biodiversity (see Theme 2), to countryside management. Some of these issues therefore have policy implications that are dealt with elsewhere within this document.

Relevant Planning Policy

The Government aims to protect and enhance rural communities and the countryside, setting out its approach through guidance primarily contained in PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas'.

Activities such as the retention, reuse, replacement, expansion and new development of rural and related buildings, farm diversification, rural tourism, the maintenance of environmental quality and countryside character and dealing with equestrian activities and a broad range of other rural land uses, are explicitly dealt with in PPS7. The guidance in PPS7 identifies the need to include policies in Local Development Documents to sustain, enhance and revitalise rural communities and the countryside, while maintaining local character and a high quality environment.

Plan Making Policy EC7 within PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' identifies that local planning authorities should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which utilise and enrich, rather than harm, the character of the countryside, its towns, villages, buildings and other features.

The development of nature-based and activity-based tourism could be an important theme for the future and link into numerous proposals to open up rural areas and the river corridors. A combination of existing and well design/located infrastructure can facilitate this.

The following points summarise the detail contained within the Core Strategy with respect to the rural environment:

- Policy CS1- In catering for rural housing needs, priority will be given to the provision of affordable housing in sustainable locations, to meet identified need. This will be provided through a rural exception site policy

- Policy CS1- Initiatives which support the rural economy and rural diversification will also be encouraged
- Policy CS3- In designing new development proposals will:
 - Make a positive contribution to the local area...
 - Be designed with safety in mind...
 - Incorporate 'long life and loose fit' buildings...
 - Safeguard the diverse cultural heritage of the Borough...
- Policy CS4- Additionally, support will be given to... Suitable enterprises that require a rural location and which support the rural economy and contribute to rural diversification
- Policy CS7- There will be no site allocations in the rural parts of the Borough
- Policy CS8- The requirement for affordable housing in the rural parts of the Borough will be identified through detailed assessments of rural housing need. The requirement will be met through the delivery of a 'rural exception' site or sites for people in identified housing need with a local connection. These homes will be affordable in perpetuity.

Core Strategy policy CS8 details the councils approach to affordable housing in rural areas. A detailed assessment of rural affordable housing need will be prepared separately to the Environment DPD. It will be the purpose of the Environment DPD to provide a policy framework to support the comments made within Policies CS1 and 4 relating to the rural economy.

The Regeneration DPD has included the limits to development designation and supporting policy. The policy for the limit to development seeks to restrict development to within the limit except where it is necessary and does not harm the character or appearance of the countryside. The purpose of this section the Environment DPD will be two fold:

- 1) Promote diversification of the rural economy, support tourism and recreation, and encourage good quality design
- 2) Protect the character/appearance of the countryside

Supporting Documents

EVIDENCE BASE

Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study
Historic Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study

The Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study form a crucial part of the evidence base for the Environment DPD. The study area for the two documents is the rural and green wedge areas within the borough.

The studies identify the varied landscape that exists within the borough, assess the character and qualities of the landscape, and where appropriate indicate how it has been influenced in the past to create the varied landscape we see today. The studies also provide guidelines for the future management of the landscape and potential landscape conservation measures.

The studies have identified 200 land use parcels with assessment of these parcels leading to the following outcomes:

- Landscape Character Assessment- The regional landscape character has been set in the 'Character of England' map produced by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, which identifies the borough as lying within the Tees Lowland character area. The Landscape character assessment report has used the assessments of the land use parcels to inform the definition and refine the identification of 7 local landscape character areas, which is in keeping with the previous LCA carried out in 1992. The character areas are:
 - East Billingham and Teesmouth
 - Wynyard
 - Thorpe Beck Valley
 - West Stockton Rural Fringe
 - River Tees Corridor
 - Yarm Rural Fringe
 - Green Wedge (between Stockton and Middlesbrough)

The report details the landform and drainage pattern, land use, field boundaries and trees, settlements, landscape characteristics as well as the landscape change and condition of these areas.

- Landscape Capacity Study- the land use areas have been assessed by grading the landscape on aspects of sensitivity of individual elements, and aesthetic and visual sensitivity. The resulting landscape capacity rating (of very high, high, medium, low and very low) for each land use area has been mapped.

The assessment and characterisations within these studies will instrumental in developing policies to preserve, enhance and judge proposals for development.

The Issues

- Should the Council set out policies that help protect and enhance valued or unique landscape features?
- How should the Council develop policies that support the development of rural recreation and tourism?
- How should the Council develop policies that support suitable enterprises that require a rural location and which support the rural economy and contribute to rural diversification?
- Should the Council prepare policies and guidance that encourages good quality design throughout the rural areas?
- How should the Council prepare policy criteria to be applied to planning applications for the conversion, re-use and replacement of buildings in the countryside?
- Should the Council give priority to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?
- Should the Council provide a policy for equine-related activities?

The Options

Managing development in the countryside

Option 1

Provision of topic specific policies for development within the countryside:

- **Conversion and re-use of buildings**
- **Replacement of buildings**
- **Farm Diversification**
- **Equine enterprises**

Q14. What should the topic specific policies seek to achieve?

Q15. Are there any other topic areas that require specific policies?

Q16. Should policies seek to ensure that development in the countryside is not detrimental to green infrastructure and where possible enhance it?

The Core Strategy identifies that the 'Planning the Future of Rural Villages study will assist the Council in applying its approach to housing proposals in the rural area.' The study provides a sustainability hierarchy of villages identifying that infill development will be appropriate within Tiers 1 and 2. However, it will not be supported in Tiers 3 and 4 where residents have a greater reliance on the private car to access facilities. Infill development should respect the rural character and density of development in the villages.

Q17. Is it appropriate for policy to restrict the residential re-use of buildings in the countryside to those associated with tier 1 and 2 villages except in exceptional circumstances?

Option 2

In addition to option 1 develop a policy approach which ensures that development is only allowed which is conducive with the 7 individual character areas outlined within the Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study.

Q18. Should this policy seek to steer development away from the most sensitive landscape areas unless unavoidable?

Protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land

PPS7 identifies that development plans should include policies that identify any major areas of agricultural land that are planned for development. The Core Strategy policy CS7 makes clear that no land is to be allocated for housing in the rural area and policy CS4 does not identify any farmland amongst the locations for employment uses.

Q19. Is there a need to identify and protect specific areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land from piecemeal development?

THEME 4- Urban Open Space (policies on the strategic management of green spaces throughout the Borough)

Introduction

Green space is a major contributor to the health and social, economic and environmental well being of local communities. They are also the most widely used facility that the council provide and as such it is imperative that we provide green spaces that are attractive, safe and well managed.

Relevant Planning Policy

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' was published in 2002. It highlights the role open space and sport provision can play in people's quality of life and in delivering wider government objectives such as:

- Supporting an urban renaissance;
- Supporting a rural renewal;
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion;
- Health and well being; and
- Promoting more sustainable development.

PPG17 and its companion guide been used to provide the comprehensive evidence base for the LDF which culminated in the production of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD. It is now the purpose of the DPDs including the Environment DPD to provide policy and address issues identified in the evidence base.

The consultation paper on a new PPS 'Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment' was proposed to replace PPG17. The consultation document for the new PPS looks to expand upon the priorities to protect, invest, rationalise and relocate different types of open space, and sport, recreation and play facilities by looking towards the role the spatial planning system has in setting out a strategic approach for the creation, protection and management of networks of green infrastructure. This focus on green infrastructure has been incorporated into the issues and options.

Core Strategy Policies 3, 6, 10 and 11 all note the important role of protecting, enhancing and providing open space and recreation to meet the needs of the current population and the requirement to support new development. Indeed Policy CS10 identifies that the *'quality of the urban environment will be maintained through the protection and enhancement of the openness and amenity value of... Urban open space and play space'*.

Strategic objective 8 of the Core Strategy highlights that:

'The provision of leisure and recreation facilities as part of the Green Blue Heart and the Tees Heritage Park will provide more open space accessible to the public, improve the opportunity for water-based facilities and enhance the area's landscape and biodiversity.'

Green Blue Heart

Developing the Green Blue Heart to provide a high quality landscape and parkland centrepiece within the urban landscape between Stockton and Middlesbrough. The Green Blue Heart is a priority project being identified within numerous strategic objectives of the Core Strategy. Within the boundary of the Green Blue Heart the Regeneration DPD identifies Portrack Marsh as an area which should be developed as a green infrastructure asset resulting in multiple benefits for the core area particularly to enable greater public use.

Tees Heritage Park

For some time there has been an aspiration to develop a new country park within the River Tees corridor, on the eastern side of the river in Ingleby Barwick. This was identified in the existing Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan (Recreation Policy 8 states that 'Land along the Tees and Leven Valleys will be designated as a country park) and in other key documents including the River Tees Navigation Strategy This aspiration has been expanded and is now identified as the Tees Heritage Park.

Tees Heritage Park is a visionary concept which will help to conserve, celebrate and enhance the unique and highly attractive stretch of countryside between central Stockton and Yarm. Through the Heritage Park project some of the stunning wildlife sites, green spaces, pathways and the River Tees itself will be promoted, for the first time, as a single 'park' and given a much stronger identity. Tees Heritage Park is a core element of the Stockton River Corridor's Action Plan. The Action Plan is complete, and includes a rolling management plan on a three-year basis.

The Green Blue Heart and the Tees Heritage Park are supported within the Core Strategy and its boundary identified within the Regeneration DPD Preferred Options. For reference the boundaries of the Tees Heritage Park and Portrack Marsh sites are identified within Appendix 3.

Supporting Documents

EVIDENCE BASE

SPD 2: Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping
Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment
Open Space Audit and Updates
Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy
Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy 2009-2021

SPD 2: Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping

The Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is designed to provide additional guidance to open space policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

PPG17 outlines the need for planning for open space and sport to be based on locally derived assessments and standards. The standards contained in the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD are locally derived using the assessment outlined in Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG17 (PPG17 Guidance). The PPG17 assessment is available as Appendix 6 to SPD 2.

SPD 2 contains standards for the quantity, quality and proximity of open space and built sports and recreation provision.

The SPD covers the first four stages outlined within the document Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion Guide to PPG17 (PPG17 Guidance) for assessing open space, sport and recreation facilities;

1. Identifying local needs
2. Auditing Local Provision
3. Setting Provision Standards
4. Applying Provision Standards

Step 5 (the final stage) of the process is 'Drafting Policies'. It is anticipated that the drafting of policies will be progressed through the Environment DPD.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Green Infrastructure is an overarching approach which be linked into all of the themes within this report. The Tees Valley and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Green Infrastructure Strategies are discuses in detail within the section entitled 'Overarching Approach: Climate Change and Green Infrastructure'

The Issues

- How should the Council set out policies to protection and enhancement urban open spaces and play space?
- How should the Council set out policies that support the development of a network of green infrastructure?
- How should the Council set out polices to protect and support the delivery of identified schemes to provide, enhance and create access to open spaces such as the Tees Heritage Park and Portrack Marsh?

The Options

Identification of provision to be protected

How should the Environment DPD protect existing open spaces or sport and recreation facilities:

Option 1

Protect all open spaces

Option 2

Protect open spaces of higher quality and value to the local community

The quality and value of open spaces identified within the PPG17 assessment of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD is summarised within Appendix 4.

Option 3

Protect spaces that are of a particular conservation, historical or cultural value

Option 4

Protect spaces that form part an essential part of the boroughs green infrastructure

Option 5

A combination of options 2, 3 and 4

Identifying existing provision to be enhanced

How should the Environment DPD identify areas of open spaces or sport and recreation facilities which should be enhanced:

Option 1

Focus to enhance higher value and lower quality spaces that are critical to avoid deficiency in a type of open space in the first instance

Option 2

Enhance spaces that are of a particular conservation, historical or cultural value

Option 3

Enhance spaces that form part an essential part of the boroughs green infrastructure

Option 4

A combination of options 1, 2 and 3

Identifying areas in which new provision is required

How should the Environment DPD identify areas where new provision is required:

Option 1

Identify areas where there is a deficiency against quantity and proximity standards

Tables detailing how well areas have performed against quantity and proximity standards as identified within the PPG17 assessment of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD are included within Appendix 4.

Option 2

In addition to the provisions in option 1 assess the requirement for new provision associated with planned increases in population

The Companion Guide to PPG17 identifies that this option should:

- Promote new provision and make allocations where there is a realistic opportunity
- Identify requirement for developer provision/contributions associated with specific new development

Identifying opportunities for new, enhanced or relocated provision

How should the Environment DPD identify opportunities for provision:

Option 1

New provision as identified within the preceding section

Option 2

Enhanced provision as identified within the preceding section

Option 3

Relocated provision where this would make a better use of land, especially if it enhances the quality and accessibility to users

Option 4

A combination of options 1, 2, and 3

Identifying potential development sites

Adopted provision standards can be used to identify existing open spaces or sport and recreation facilities that may be acceptable to class as 'surplus to requirements'. Should policy within the Environment DPD:

Option 1

Do not seek to identify potential development sites

Option 2

Seeks as a first priority to ensure that in an area where the provision of a type of open space has met provision standards the presumption should be to use part of that space for a type of provision to remedy deficiency in that area

Option 3

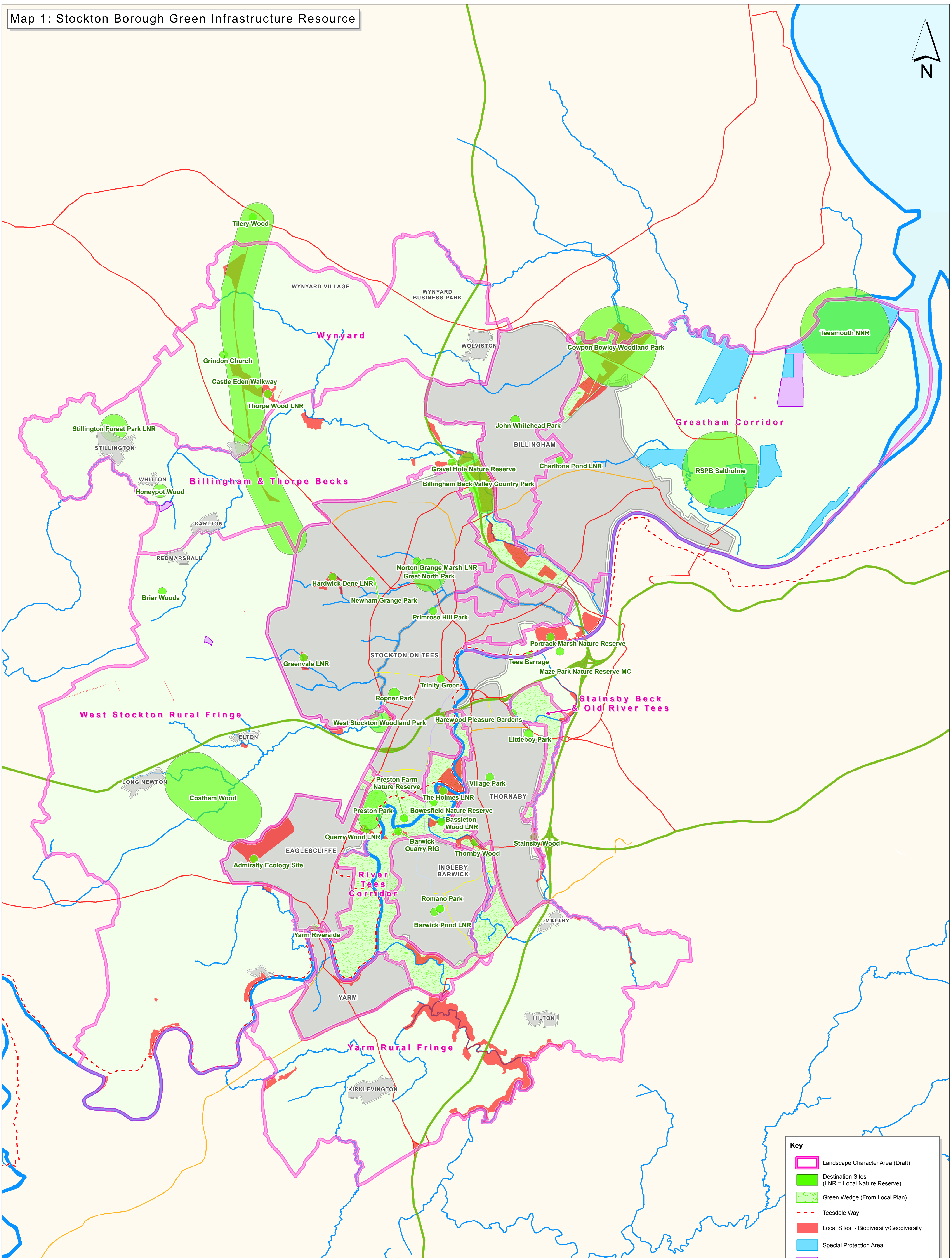
Where option 2 has not been able to identify an opportunity for the creation of a valued type of open space, identify sites which are 'surplus to requirements' and deemed suitable for development

Q20. Should the Environment DPD include policies that protect and support the delivery of the Tees Heritage Park and Portrack Marsh? What should these

policies be specifically aiming to achieve?

Appendix 1: Green Infrastructure Resource

Map 1: Stockton Borough Green Infrastructure Resource

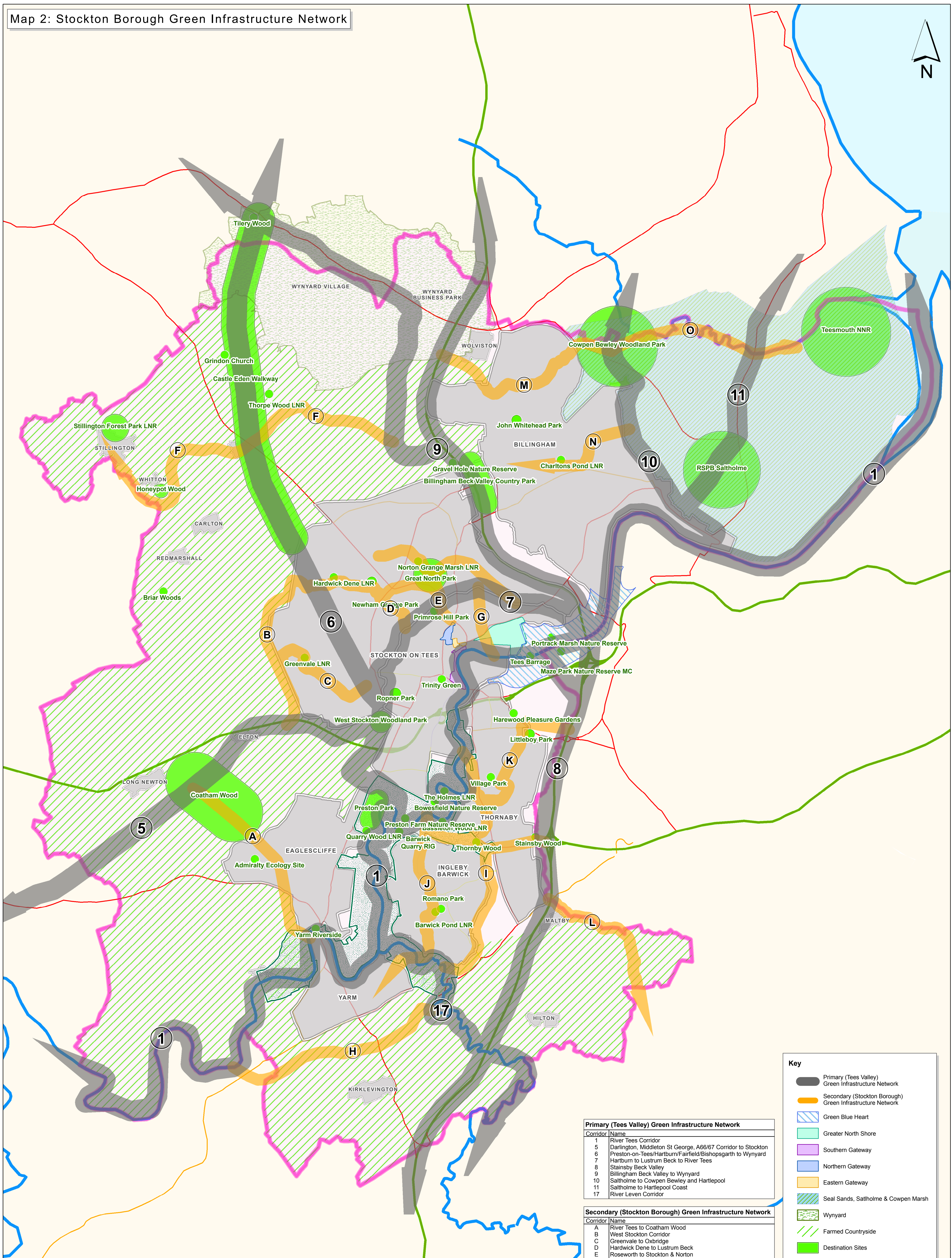


Key

- Landscape Character Area (Draft)
- Destination Sites (LNR = Local Nature Reserve)
- Green Wedge (From Local Plan)
- Teesdale Way
- Local Sites - Biodiversity/Geodiversity
- Special Protection Area
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Towns
- Village
- Borough

Appendix 2: Green Infrastructure Network

Map 2: Stockton Borough Green Infrastructure Network



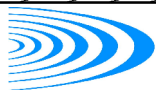
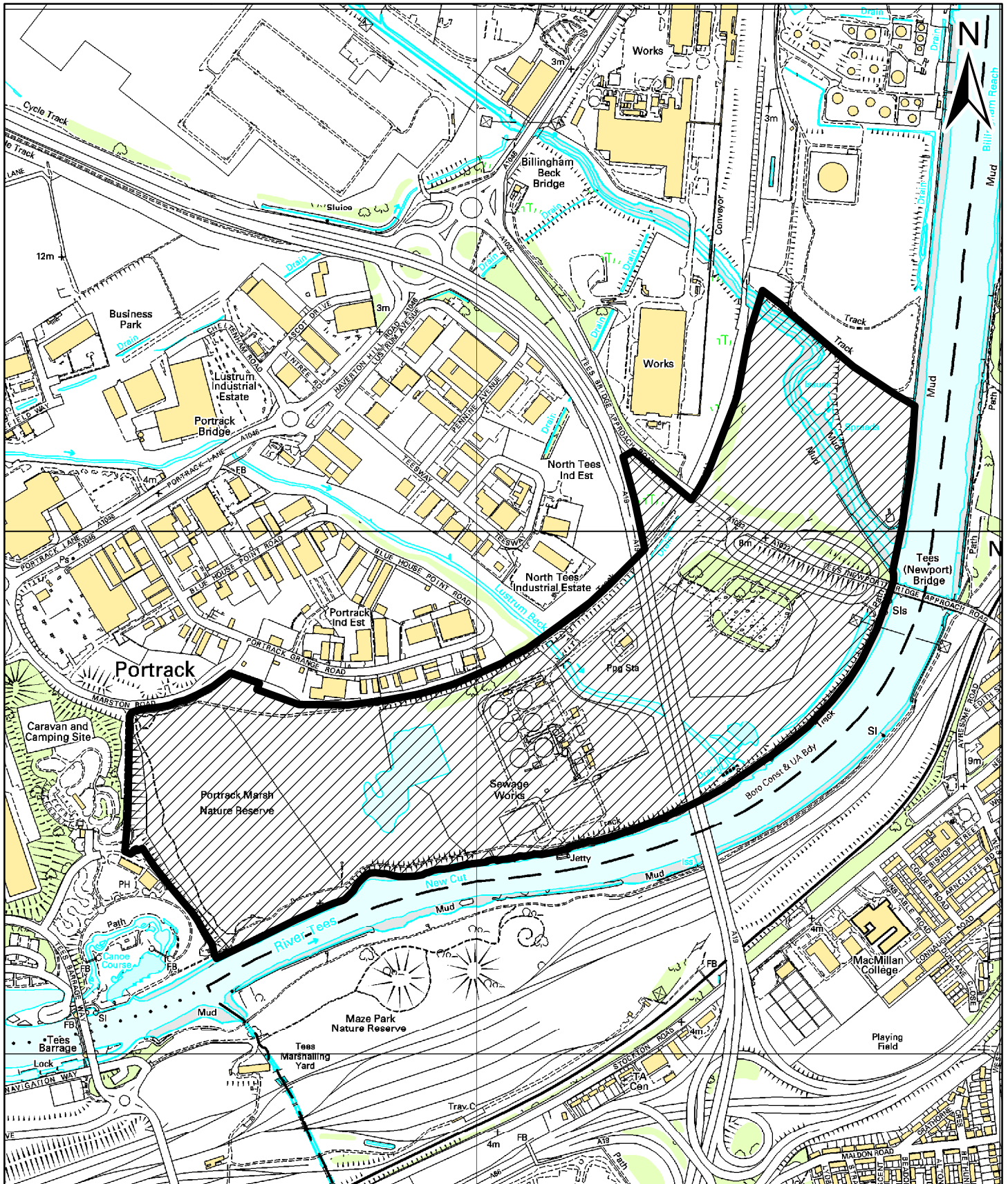
Primary (Tees Valley) Green Infrastructure Network	
Corridor	Name
1	River Tees Corridor
5	Darlington, Middleton St George, A66/67 Corridor to Stockton
6	Preston-on-Tees/Hartburn/Fairfield/Bishopsgarth to Wynyard
7	Hartburn to Lustrum Beck to River Tees
8	Stainsby Beck Valley
9	Billingham Beck Valley to Wynyard
10	Saltholme to Cowpen Bewley and Hartlepool
11	Saltholme to Hartlepool Coast
17	River Leven Corridor

Secondary (Stockton Borough) Green Infrastructure Network	
Corridor	Name
A	River Tees to Coatham Wood
B	West Stockton Corridor
C	Greenvale to Oxbridge
D	Hardwick Dene to Lustrum Beck
E	Roseworth to Stockton & Norton
F	Thorpe Beck to Stillington
G	Northshore to Lustrum Beck
H	Saltergill to Leven Bridge
I	Bassleton Beck, Thornaby Wood to A174
J	River Tees to Ingleby Barwick & Yarm
K	Old River Tees to Thornaby Green & Thornaby Wood
L	Maltby Beck Corridor
M	Cowbridge Beck Corridor
N	Charlton's Pond to East Billingham Transport Corridor
O	Teesmouth, Greatham Creek

Key

- Primary (Tees Valley) Green Infrastructure Network
- Secondary (Stockton Borough) Green Infrastructure Network
- Green Blue Heart
- Greater North Shore
- Southern Gateway
- Northern Gateway
- Eastern Gateway
- Seal Sands, Saltholme & Cowpen Marsh
- Wynyard
- Farmed Countryside
- Destination Sites
- River Tees Heritage Park
- Towns
- Village
- Borough

Appendix 3: Portrack Marsh and Tees Heritage Park



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Development & Neighbourhood Services
Corporate Director: P Dobson

Head of Planning: C Straughan
Gloucester House, Church Road,
Stockton on Tees. TS18 1TW
Telephone: (01642) 393939

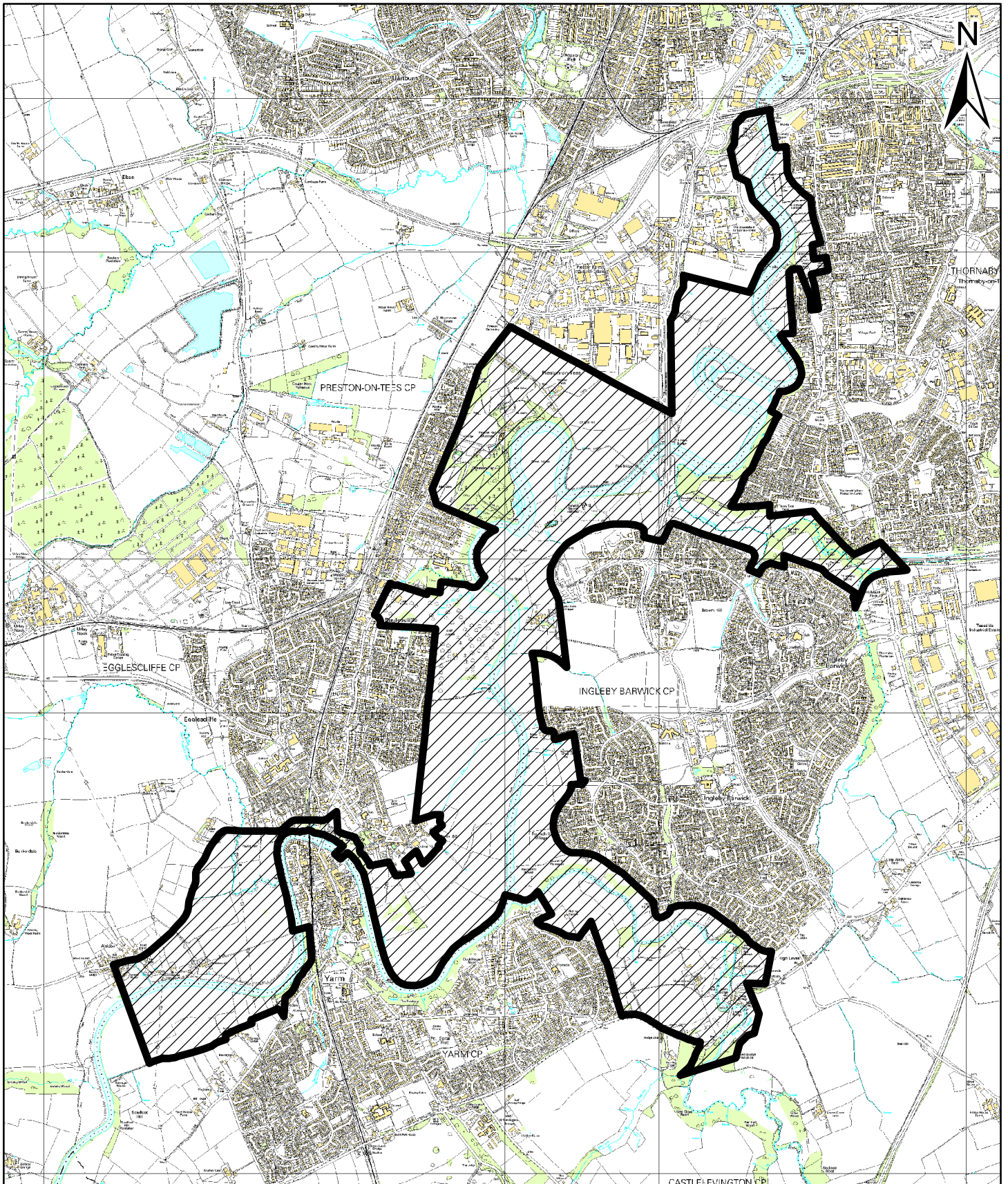
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Portrack Marsh




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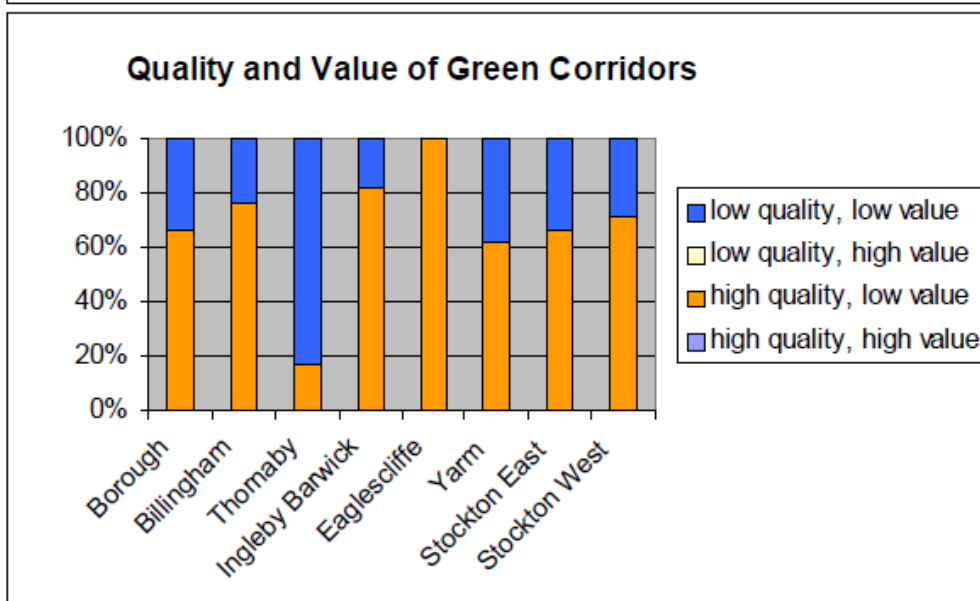
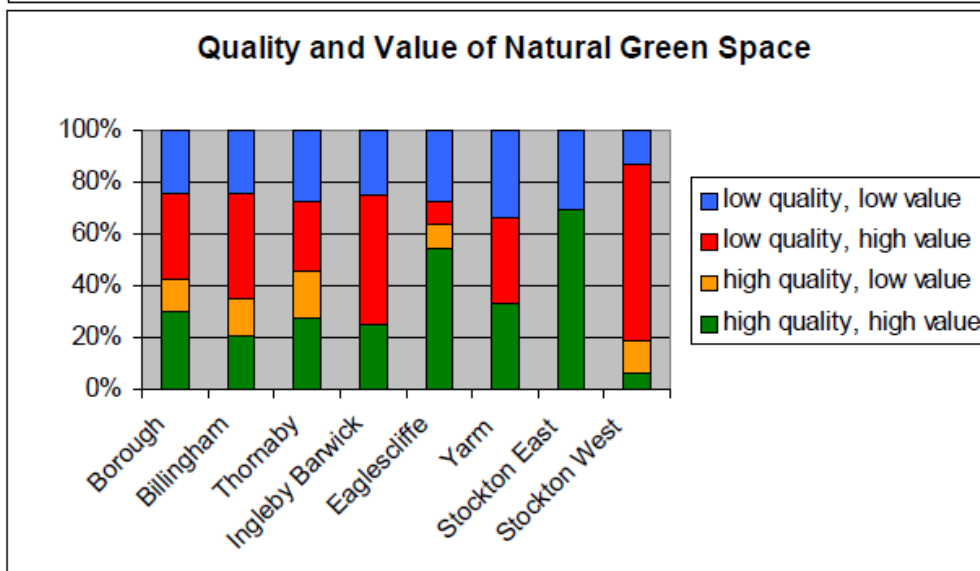
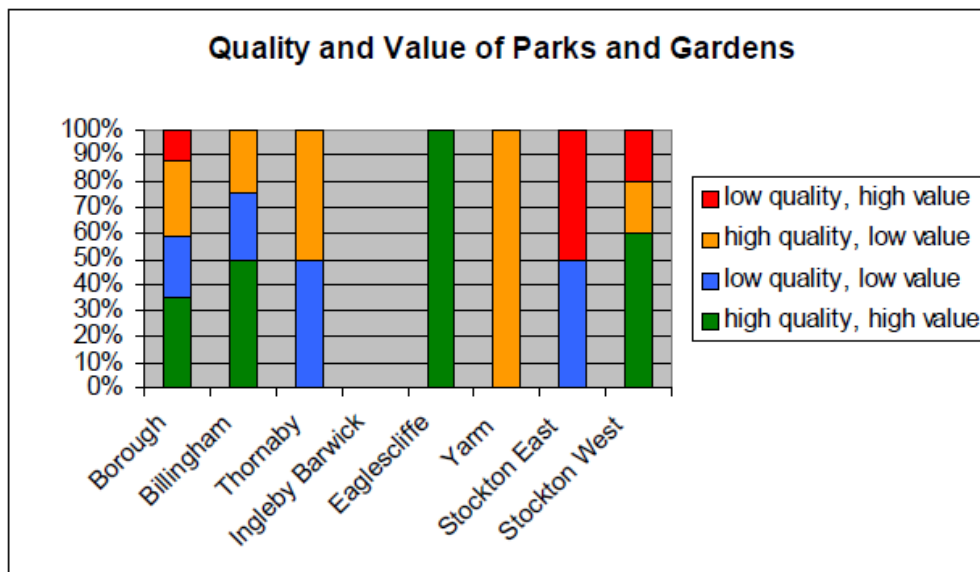
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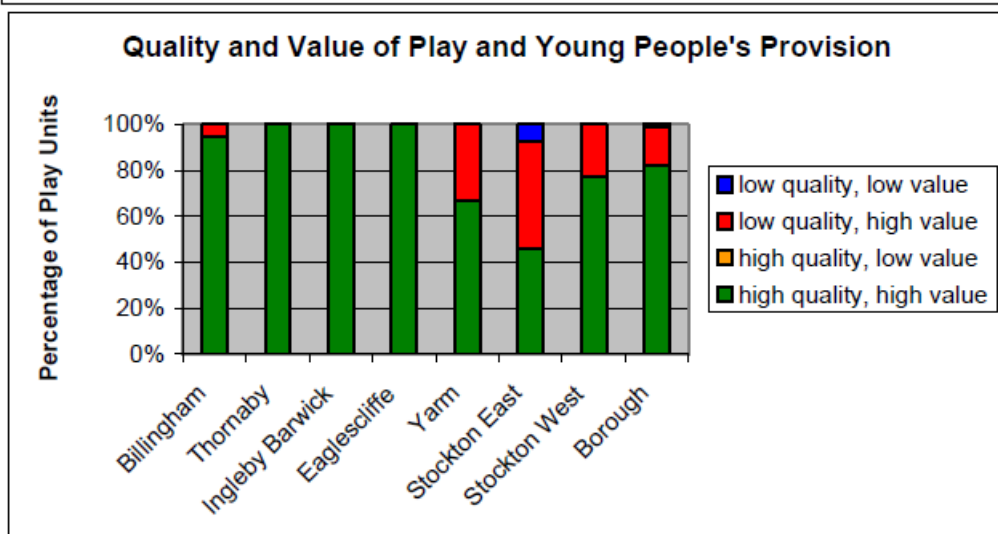
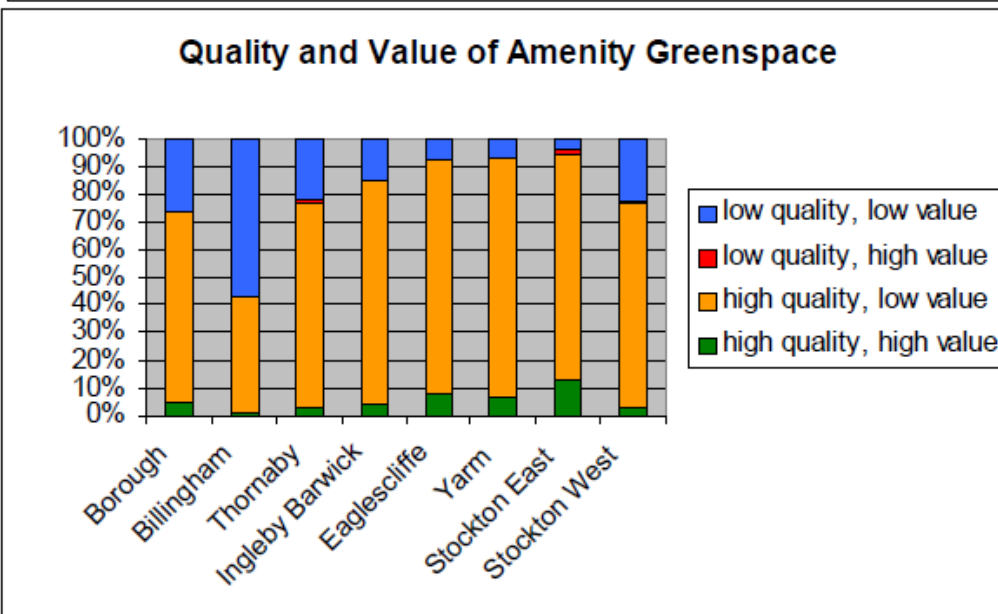
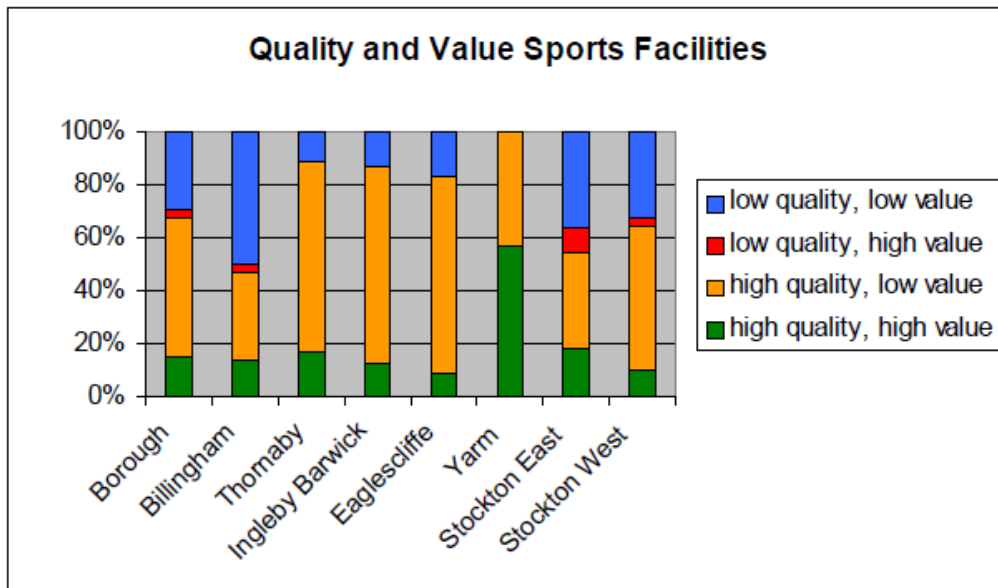
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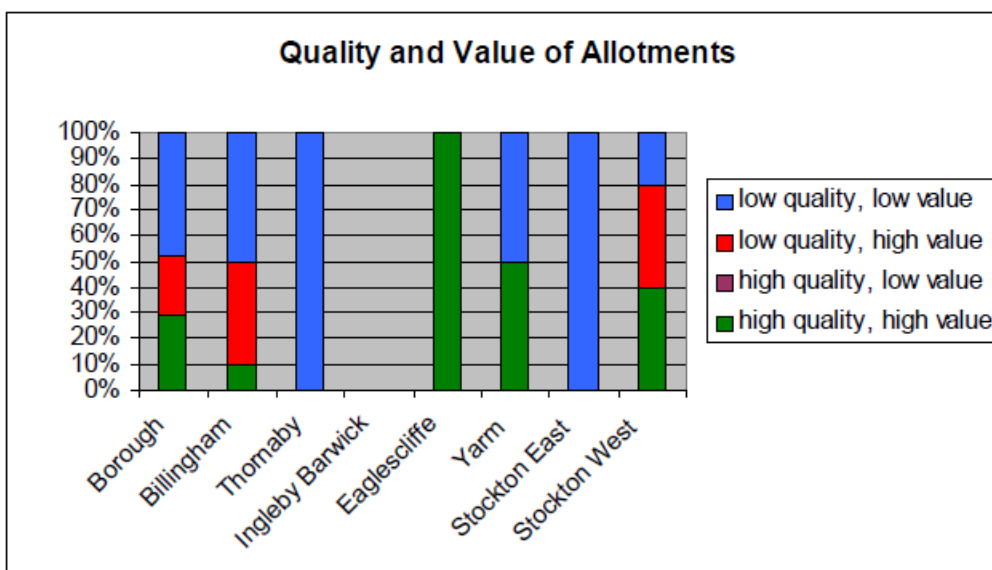
Tees Heritage Park

Appendix 4: Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD

Quality and Value







Quantity Standards

Areas that Meet/ Do Not Yet Meet the Quantity Standards for Open Space

Type of Space	Billingham	Thornaby	Ingleby Barwick	Eaglescliffe	Yarm	Stockton East	Stockton West
Parks and Gardens	↑	✓	↑	✓	↑	✓	✓
Natural Greenspace	✓	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Outdoor Sports Facilities	✓	↑	↑	✓	✓	✓	↑
Amenity Greenspace	↑	✓	↑	✓	✓	✓	↑
Play/ young people's areas	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Allotments	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

✓=Areas that do meet the quantity standards

↑= Areas that do not yet meet the quantity standard

Proximity Standards

Type of Open Space	Proximity Standard	% of households within standard
Parks and Gardens	2km	58%
Strategic Parks	5km	80%
Natural Green Space	1km	76%
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1km	91%
Amenity Green Space	600m	90%
Play/ young people's areas	1km	63%
Allotments	2km	68%