

PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room 2) on
Tuesday, 22nd February 2011 at 6.00 p.m.**

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1.	Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any)	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
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4.	Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 4th January, 2011 (copy attached)	5
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**This information can be made available on request in other languages. If you require this, please
Telephone 0191 561 7994**

6.	Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 1st February, 2011	12
	(copy attached)	
7.	Report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton, Washington) Sub Committee held on 20th December, 2010	14
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14. **Durham County Council County Plan Core Strategy
Minerals Technical Paper Consultation**

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Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copy attached)

Elaine Waugh,
Head of Law and Governance,

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND
14th February, 2011

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY 25TH JANUARY, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: -

Councillor Tye in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Copeland, Ellis, Essl, Fletcher, M. Forbes, Francis, E. Gibson, G. Hall, Miller, Old, Padgett, Scaplehorn, Snowdon, Tye, P. Watson, Wood and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Miller made an open declaration in connection with item 7 as he had previously indicated his support for the proposals having been consulted as a local ward councillor. He agreed to withdraw from the meeting prior to the consideration of the item.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Charlton, Howe, O'Connor, J.B. Scott, J. Scott and D. Wilson.

Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 14th December, 2010

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14th December, 2010 (copy circulated) be approved subject to the inclusion of apologies from Councillors Ellis and Scaplehorn.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 30th November, 2010

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 30th November, 2010 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report be agreed and noted subject to the inclusion of apologies from Councillors Ellis, Fletcher and Wood.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 21st December, 2010

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 21st December, 2010 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton, Washington) Sub-Committee held on 9th December, 2010

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 9th December, 2010 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

Objections to the Proposed No Waiting at Any Time Restrictions on Ayton Road and Kestral Close, Washington South

The Executive Director of City Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Planning and Highways Committee of the objections received to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the introduction of No Waiting at Any Time Restrictions on Ayton Road and Kestral Close, Washington South.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Andrew Jackman, Interim Assistant Head of Traffic and Road Safety, presented the report and advised that two objections had been received from residents, both raising concerns regarding the extent of the proposals.

He advised that the Washington Area Committee had agreed to provide funding from their Strategic Initiatives Budget along with Gentoo to convert some of the grass verge in Kestral Close to provide additional off-street parking provision.

The Chairman invited Bridget Murray, objector, to make her representation.

Ms. Murray advised that she had no objection in principle to the restrictions being put in place if more off-street parking facilities were to be provided for the residents; however she requested that the additional parking places were created prior to the restrictions being implemented.

Members of the Committee agreed that such a request would resolve the objectors' concerns and accordingly it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Executive Director of City Services be recommended to defer the implementation of the waiting restrictions until the additional off-street parking spaces have been provided in Kestral Close.

Sunderland City Council Local Development Framework: Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Neil Cole presented the report and provided a summary of the performance against the nationally set Core Output Indicators in 2009 / 10

6. RESOLVED that the contents of the Annual Monitoring Report be received and noted.

Change of use of Two Single Dwellings to Homes for Children with Autism

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members on progress following the previous report to Committee on 20th July, 2010 concerning the use of five dwellings in the City by North East Autism Society (NEAS) as homes for children with autism.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, presented the update to the Committee.

Councillor Wood was disappointed that NEAS had failed to submit planning applications in respect of each of the properties. He also noted that NEAS had refused to provide a list of other properties in the area owned by NEAS.

Members supported the recommendation outlined in paragraph 4.0 which proposed to keep the situation under review for the time being before taking a decision about whether to close the cases. Those enforcement notices issued would remain attached to the land and new cases would be opened and investigated if new complaints were received in future. Members requested that a further progress report be submitted to the Committee in six months time.

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

In accordance with Section 100(B) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman agreed by reason of the special circumstances that the following item could be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

Response to Communities and Local Government Consultation on Proposals for Changes to Planning Application Fees in England

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to endorse the officers' response to the consultation 'Proposals for Changes to Planning Application Fees in England'.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Mike Mattok presented the report and advised that on 15 November 2010, Communities and Local Government (CLG) launched a rapid consultation process about changing how planning application fees were set.

The consultation period was for 8 weeks instead of the recommended period of 12 weeks and expired on 7 January 2011. The reduced consultation period had been set because of the need to prepare secondary legislation, which would need to be debated and approved by Parliament before it could come into effect on 4th April 2011. An 8 week period of consultation meant that the Government could take into account representations before drafting secondary legislation.

Members having discussed the report it was:

8. RESOLVED that Committee is recommended to note and endorse the officer's response set out in Appendix 1, in order to ensure that the Council contributed to the consultation and outcome.

The Chairman then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) P. Tye
Chairman.

**At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND)
SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 4th JANUARY, 2011
at 4.45 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Copeland, M. Dixon, Essl, Fletcher, Miller, P. Watson and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ball, Ellis, M. Forbes, Tye and Wood

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report and supplementary report (copies circulated) relating to the South Sunderland area, copies of which had been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

10/03530/FUL – Proposed part demolition and erection of 3 storey extension to The Bridges, reconfiguration of internal unit and stopping up of highway.

The Deputy Chief Executive's representative advised that the application was still under consideration.

1. RESOLVED that the application be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

10/03629/LAP – Erection of single storey extension to rear to provide store and new flat roof with parapet wall to existing open yard area, to include plantwork to roof area.

Councillor P. Watson expressed concerns over the potential noise generated by the rooftop plant in what was a quiet area. His main concern was at night where the noise could travel to the properties on Hadleigh Road and may cause a potential nuisance. He also queried whether the plant would only be in use when the crematorium was in operation.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the plant was a cooling system which flowed air over the refrigeration equipment and was not known to be a noisy piece of equipment. Should there be any issues with noise then there would be work carried out to identify any mitigating steps which could be taken. There had been no objections raised by Environmental Health. The plant was required to ensure that the crematorium complied with the regulations on the abatement of mercury emissions as directed by the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010.

The Chairman suggested that if appropriate a condition could be added to any consent; if granted; to ensure that there was no adverse effect on residential amenity caused by the noise from the plant.

Councillor Miller referred to the report which stated that the equipment would be screened by the existing building. He also suggested that it could be useful for Members to be given an understanding of the technical information.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the screening provided by the existing building should be sufficient to ensure that there were no noise problems for nearby residents.

2. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the six conditions set out therein and subject to a further condition if considered appropriate by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with Environmental Health regarding the operation of the rooftop plant..

10/03822/FUL – Erection of a new 950m2 2-3 storey office building with ancillary parking and reconfigured access from Lindsay Road. Stopping Up of highway and change of use to private parking area.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that planning permission had previously been granted in 2008 however there had been a change to the specification of the shipping containers to be used which would result in a 400mm increase in the height of the building; therefore it had been necessary for a new application to be submitted.

Councillor P. Watson referred to condition 11 and asked whether a Tree Preservation Order for the existing trees would be more appropriate. He was concerned that in the future the trees could be lost and a TPO would prevent this.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the trees were not currently protected and the quality of the trees would need to be investigated before a TPO could be considered as the trees may not be of a high enough quality to merit a TPO. It was because of this that the condition had been proposed.

Councillor Copeland queried whether it could be possible to include a condition requiring the replacement of any trees removed.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that Condition 12 required the replacement of any trees planted during the development should they be removed. There would not normally be a requirement for trees already on the site to be replaced if they were removed.

Councillor M. Dixon welcomed the development which he hoped would help provide opportunities for the area.

3. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the 16 conditions set out therein.

Items for Information

The Chairman advised that it was intended that a site visit take place on Friday, 21st January, 2011 for the previously requested site visits for:

10/02291/OUT – Edward Thompson Group, Sunderland Paper Mill, Ocean Road, Sunderland; and
10/03151/FUL – Middle Herrington Farm Foxcover Lane Sunderland SR3 3TQ.

4. RESOLVED that site visits be undertaken to the above application sites.

(Signed) E. GIBSON
Chairman

At an extraordinary meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 11th JANUARY, 2011 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Copeland, M. Dixon, M. Forbes, Miller, Old, Tye, Wood and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charlton, Ellis, Essl, Fletcher and P. Watson

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report and supplementary report (copies circulated) relating to the South Sunderland area, copies of which had been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

Change in the order of Business

The Chairman advised that as there was a number of speakers present for the second application, 10/03519/LAP – Site of surface car park Tavistock Place, that this application would be heard first.

10/03519/LAP – Provision of a three storey commercial office building to include community facilities and publically accessible café at ground floor level with associated landscaping and car parking

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the application had previously been deferred following a high court decision relating to the neighbouring site at Murton Street. Due to this High Court decision there would now be a re-examination of the Murton Street development by the planning inspectorate and as

such there was a need to ensure that the Software City development did not cause overshadowing. The work to determine the level of overshadowing had been completed on 23rd December, 2010 and it had been shown that there would be very little effect on the neighbouring development.

The Chairman introduced the first of the speakers, Mrs Ronald, who was speaking against the application.

Mrs Ronald advised that she was representing the Museum; she was a member of the friends of the museum. Her objection was based around the loss of the car park; the Tatham Street car park was not as accessible, especially at night, and she had been informed that the Civic Centre car park was not open at night. She wanted to know whether the new 100 space car park would be as easily accessible as the existing Tavistock Place car park.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the new car park was likely to be located on land south of the Crown building.

The Chairman then introduced the second speaker, Mr Lloyd. Mr Lloyd was a local resident and had provided a written objection to the committee and had also spoken against the application at the meeting held on 21st December, 2010.

Mr Lloyd, in his written statement and at the last meeting had raised concerns over the loss of the car park which was popular and well used at all times of the day and night. There had been planning permission granted for nearby apartments which did not have their own parking provision and he believed that this permission had been granted on the basis that residents would have been able to use the nearby public car parking.

In addressing the committee, Mr Lloyd stated that this committee had approved the surface car park at Tavistock Place. He had concerns over the decision which had been made by the Cabinet on 10th March, 2010, which seemed like a prejudgement of the application. He felt that it was important that the committee look at whether the development was appropriate for the city and its residents.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the decision taken by Cabinet had been for the procurement of the Software City; part of this decision was that planning permission would be sought for the development.

Councillor Wood commented that this was a desirable potential development and would be an asset to the city regardless of where it was built. The main issue in his mind was whether this was the right site. He had concerns over the loss of the car park; the development would increase the demand for parking in this part of the city centre yet there was to be the loss of 150 spaces. He found it hard to believe that the existing car park was surplus to requirements; there had been reference to the new 100 space car park however there was no information as to when this would be provided. He wanted to know what would be done to maximise the parking provision in the area should the planning permission be granted. There was a lay-by on Toward Road and a grass area outside of Prontaprint which could be used for short term parking.

Councillor Wood then stated that the image of the area the Software City was located in was important; this report had referred to concerns over the image of the area however there was very little detail on this matter. He commented that he was in two minds about the application; it was a desirable application however there were real concerns over parking.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there was a need to encourage the use of Public Transport; as the application site was within the city centre there were good public transport links with the Metro and bus routes within close proximity. There were also 4000 car parking spaces within the city centre. There was the possibility of some on street parking provision within the area and it was his understanding that the Highways Engineers were looking at the proposals.

The representative of the Council's Highways Department stated that this was a city centre site with good public transport links. The possibility of improving the footpaths and road junctions to accommodate an increase in the number of pedestrians in the vicinity of the site was being investigated.

Councillor Miller welcomed the proposal to create jobs on a flagship site which would greatly improve the Tavistock area. He sympathised with the local residents and understood why they had an issue with the loss of the car park however it was important to consider that there was surplus car parking provision in Sunderland, especially in the Tavistock area.

Councillor M. Forbes commented that the new, high tech jobs were highly welcome. She was however not convinced by the location. The Vaux site would have been a suitable option as it was a prominent site which was allocated for office use subject to the resolution of the existing land ownership issues. The use of the Vaux site would also prevent the loss of car parking. The loss of the car park would damage the existing local businesses and it seemed to be contradictory to be promoting new jobs while not catering for the existing businesses.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was intended that work be carried out to develop the Software City as soon as possible. The Vaux site was not currently available as an alternative site for the development.

Councillor Tye stated that while Tesco owned the Vaux site it was unavailable for redevelopment although the Council and its public sector partners were working to acquire the site. He was pleased to see that the fencing at the Tavistock car park would be moved to the Tatham Street car park. There were perceptions of security issues at the Tatham Street car park and the installation of the fence would help to improve perceptions.

Councillor Copeland commented that it would be better to be able to start work on the development straight away rather than waiting for the Vaux site to become available. The development would add to the Sunnyside area and would help to improve the Tavistock area along with helping to put Sunderland on the map and attract more businesses to the city.

Councillor M. Dixon stated that there needed to be flexibility with regards to the parking in the area. It would be beneficial if there was short term parking to allow people to park for up to one hour while visiting local businesses. He asked whether the existing on street parking at Laura Street would remain.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was likely that this parking would remain.

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 16 conditions set out therein and subject to two further conditions:

17. Before the cafe use hereby approved is commenced, details of the ventilation/extraction/filtration system, including all external ducting and stacks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. All works shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details before the use commences, in order to protect the amenities of the area and to comply with policy S12 of the UDP.

18. Notwithstanding the submitted details, noise levels arising from the operation of the plant and equipment from the development hereby approved shall not exceed the background noise level by more than 5dBA or, if the noise is tonal, should not exceed the background noise at all, at any noise sensitive property in order to protect the amenities of the area and to comply with policy EN5 and B2 of the UDP.

10/03530/FUL – Proposed part demolition and erection of 3 storey extension to The Bridges, reconfiguration of internal unit and stopping up of highway.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there had been concerns raised over access, health and safety and urban design and as such the recommendation was for the decision to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

Councillor Tye welcomed the development at what was a prominent location within the city centre. He queried what would happen to the existing Primark store once the new store had been opened.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that this would be a bigger and better store than the existing and would benefit the city. It was not known exactly how long the existing store would remain empty for.

Councillor Miller commented that this would improve the pedestrian experience for this area and welcomed the development.

2. RESOLVED that the decision be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

(Signed) E. GIBSON
Chairman

**At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND)
SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 1st FEBRUARY,
2011 at 4.45 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Charlton, Copeland, M. Dixon, Fletcher, M. Forbes, Miller, Tye, Wood and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ellis, Old and P. Watson

**Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and
Regulations made thereunder**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report, supplementary report and circulatory report (copies circulated) relating to the South Sunderland area, copies of which had been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

**10/03699/FUL – Erection of restaurant with associated access and parking
(Revised information received in relation to site ownership 23.12.10)**

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there were outstanding highways matters that were still under consideration, the period for the receipt of representations did not expire until 4th February, 2011 and that as the application site was owned by the Council it would not be possible for the application to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive for determination. Therefore the officer's recommendation was for Members to defer the application to a future meeting.

1. RESOLVED that the application be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee to allow the expiry of the consultation period and further consideration of outstanding highway matters

Items for Information

2. RESOLVED that a site visit be undertaken to the following application:-

10/03941/FUL – Land to the Rear of Bevan Avenue, Sunderland, at the request of Councillor Ball

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeals

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the appeals received and determined for the period 1st December, 2010 to 31st December, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) E. GIBSON
Chairman

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 2010 at 4.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Fletcher in the Chair

Councillors Miller, Padgett, D. Richardson, Snowden, Tate and Wakefield

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Miller and D. Richardson declared personal and prejudicial interests in application 10/03294/FUL – demolition of industrial units and construction of 60 no. dwellings and garages for residential purposes at Land at Volker Stevin/Van Elle Windsor Road/Springwell as Members of Bowes Railway Company Limited which may benefit financially from the signing of a Section 106 agreement, and left the meeting during consideration of the application.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Scaplehorn and J. Scott

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies circulated) and a supplementary report, which related to Hetton, Houghton and Washington areas, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Cabinet upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

10/03294/FUL – Demolition of industrial units and construction of 60 no. dwellings and garages for residential purposes, with associated landscaping and access from Springwell Road at land at Volker Stevin/Van Elle Windsor Road/Springwell Road, Springwell Village, Gateshead, NE9 7QN

Councillor Wakefield commented on the proximity of the Springwell Landfill site to the proposed development and the potential for generation of odours from waste,

given that the landfill permit granted by the Environment allows household waste to be deposited. Other comments were received from the floor noting that the site is one which does not currently accept domestic waste and that the Environment Agency, as the enforcing body dealing with odours would be in a position to take measures to reduce potential nuisance not only in respect of the application site but also to other nearby residential properties in Springwell. Therefore, the main issue to be considered in relation to the location of the site is the impact of noise on the proposed residential properties which conditions within the planning permission, should it be granted, would address.

1. RESOLVED that the decision be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to either:-

a. Grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the supplementary report subject to conditions and subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement by 30th December, 2010 or such other date as is agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive and subject to a further condition whereby no properties should be occupied until access arrangements to the site were finalised and brought into place; or

b. Refuse permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 30th December, 2010 or such other date as is agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive.

10/03337/FUL – Erection of a single storey warden's lodge with associated car parking and boundary fencing at Reservoir East of 23 Eddison Road, Rear of 31-36 Lakeside Gardens and North of Sherringham House, Swan, Washington

2. RESOLVED that the application for planning permission be withdrawn at the request of the applicant.

(Signed) J. FLETCHER,
Chairman.

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 1st FEBRUARY, 2011 at 5.45p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Fletcher in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Miller, Padgett, D. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Snowdon, Tate and Wakefield

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Tate declared personal interests in applications 10/03624/FUL – Hetton Lyons Workshops, Hetton Lyons Industrial Estate and 10/04067/FUL – High Moorsley Farm, Moorsly Road, Hetton le Hole, as a Member of Hetton Town Council, which is a consultee and which in such capacity, he had not taken part in any consideration or discussion of their response.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cuthbert, I. Richardson and J. Scott

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies circulated), a supplementary report and a report for circulation, which related to Hetton, Houghton and Washington areas, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Cabinet upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

10/03228/FUL – Erection of a materials recycling facility for the processing of wood, plastics, cardboard, metal and rubble at land at Monument Park, Washington East, NE38 8QU

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that a verbal objection had been received from Durham group who operated as Premier Waste, regarding the fact that some works had already been undertaken on the site. He advised that the

Council would not take the decision to enforce any action on this matter until the application had been considered by this Committee. The period for the receipt of further representation did not expire until the 8th February, 2011 and therefore, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the application be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to approve the application subject to no new objections or representations being received by 8th February, 2011 for the reasons as given and subject to the twenty four conditions as set out in the supplementary report.

10/03624/FUL – Change of use from agricultural merchants depot to a storage and vehicle maintenance facility at Hetton Lyons Workshop (former NCB Workshops), Hetton Lyons Industrial Estate, Hetton le Hole, DH5 0RH

Although Members attention was drawn to condition four within the report which stated that no activities other than those detailed in the application shall be carried out at the site between the hours of 20:00 and 07:00 without being approved by the Local Planning Authority, concerns were still raised around what would happen if the intensity of work currently being undertaken was to increase, possibly causing noise disturbances during the night and over weekends. Members requested that a time limit be placed on any approval of the application so that it could be revisited should the need occur.

2. RESOLVED that the application for a change of use be approved for the reasons as given and subject to the eight conditions set out in the report and an additional condition limiting the permission for a period of three years

10/03923/FUL – Substitution of house types application ref: 09/02185/REM, 09/02328/REM and 09/04769/FUL on land at the former Lambton Cokeworks, Elba Park, Lambton Lane, Houghton-le-Spring

3. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons as given and subject to the fifteen conditions as set out in the report.

10/04067/FUL – Erection of agricultural storage building at High Moorsley Farm, Moorsley Road, Hetton le Hole, DH5 0RJ

4. RESOLVED that the application be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to approve subject to no representations of objections having been received by the 4th February, 2011, for the reasons given and subject to the five conditions as set out in the report.

Items for Information

5. RESOLVED that a site visit be undertaken to the following applications:-

- 10/03726/HYB – Land East of Pattinson Road, Washington, Tyne and Wear at the request of Councillor Miller; and
- Radial 64 (Former Dunlop Tyre Factory), Birtley Road, Washington at the request of Councillor Miller.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeals

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the appeals received for the period 1st December, 2010 to 31st December, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) J. FLETCHER,
Chairman.

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (NORTH SUNDERLAND) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2011 at 5.30 P.M.

Present

Councillor Copeland in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, E. Gibson, Miller and L. Walton.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Charlton, Francis, Howe, Tye and D. Wilson.

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) relating to the North Sunderland area, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council upon applications made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

10/03821/LAP – Change of use of amenity open space to additional car parking – Land to front of 78, 80, 82 Hylton Castle Road

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved subject to the two conditions set out in the report.

(Signed) R. COPELAND,
Chairman.

CONSULTATIONS FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS – SOUTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's agreement to responses about to be made to consultations from neighbouring Councils about planning applications affecting sites close to the common boundary with the City of Sunderland.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Where the Council is consulted by a neighbouring authority on planning applications in their area but which may have an impact on Sunderland's interests, the approval of the Planning and Highways Committee is obtained to agree the form of the proposed response.

3.0 CURRENT CONSULTATIONS AND RESPONSE

- 3.1 Sunderland City Council has recently been consulted by South Tyneside Council on the planning application (Sunderland reference number 11/00100/CAA) which is detailed below.

- 3.2 **Notifying Authority:-** South Tyneside Council

Application no:- ST/2061/10/FUL

Applicant:- Miss D Talbot

Proposal:- Proposed Change of Use of agricultural land to use as dog training, with car park area. Repair and upgrade of existing post and rail/wire fences to boundary.

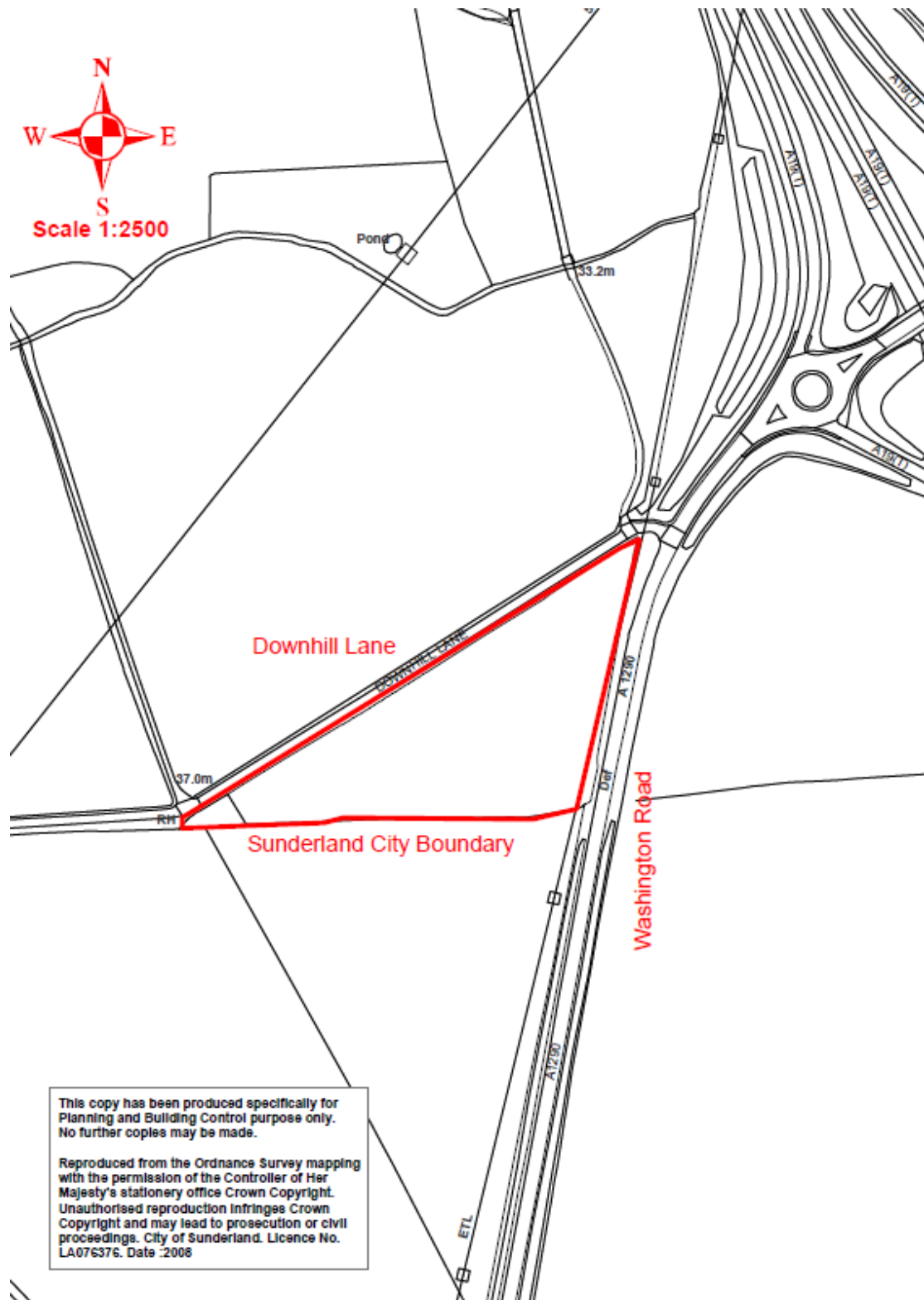
Location:- Land South East of Downhill Lane, and West of the A1290, West Boldon

- 3.3 The proposal seeks to change the use of an area of agricultural land, which is located in the South Tyneside/Sunderland Greenbelt, for the purposes of a dog training area with associated car parking. The proposal will also bring about repair and upgrade works to the existing post and rail/wire fences which bound the application site. No buildings are proposed. It is intended that the proposed use would operate only for daylight hours, two evenings a weeks. Indoor training would continue to take place at various sites around the north-east. The proposed

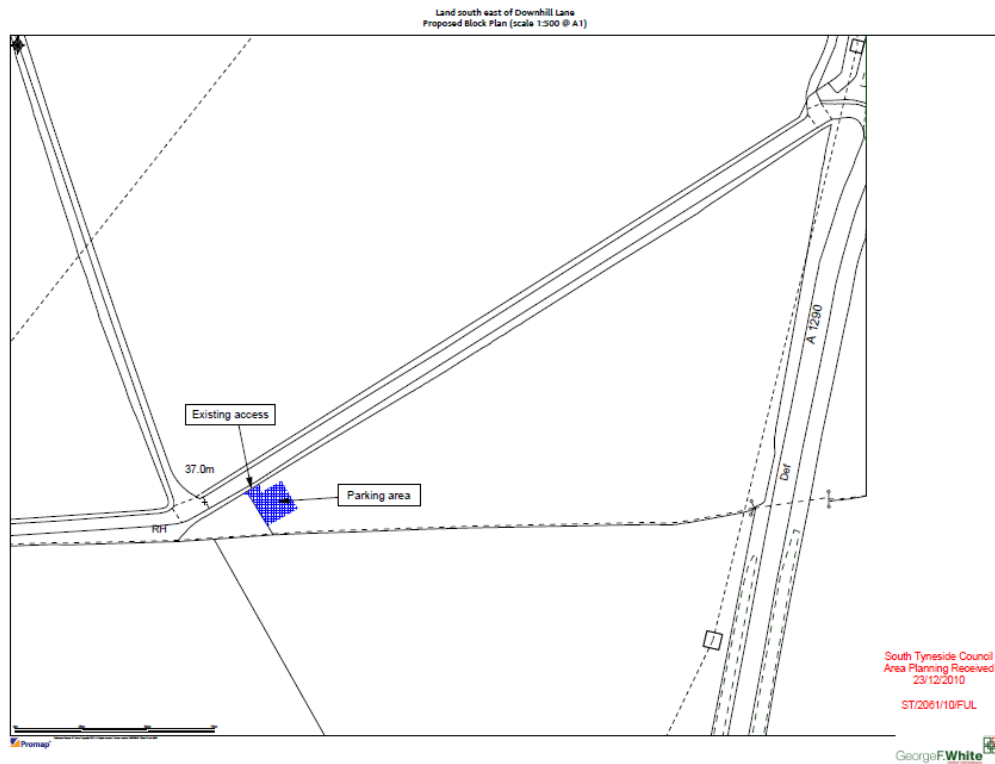
physical works to the boundary enclosure would involve the erection of a chicken wire mesh fence over the post and rail/wire to ensure that dogs cannot leave the site unaccompanied. The hedgerow will be supplemented and allowed to fully grow around the post and rail fence, whilst the site will remain a grassed area and maintained as such thereafter. No other physical works are proposed.

- 3.4 The site is a triangular parcel of land situated on the boundary of South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council. Downhill Lane runs along the north-western boundary. (See Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The key issues to consider in relation to this proposal from the City Councils perspective are (i) the visual impact of proposal on the Green Belt and (ii) whether the proposal would result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety. In terms of the resulting impact on visual amenity it is considered that owing to the intended operation of the use as detailed in the Planning Statement and nature of physical works to the boundary enclosure there will be no significant adverse impact on the openness or visual amenity value of the area. In addition, following consultation with the executive Director of City Services (Transportation), no observations or recommendations have been offered in relation to the proposal.
- 3.6 It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use and works to the boundary enclosure will not result in any adverse visual amenity impacts on the Green Belt or have an effect upon highway safety.
- 4.0 CONCLUSION.
- 4.1 As it is unlikely that the proposed change of use will have any negative effects, it is recommended that Sunderland City Council advise South Tyneside Council that it does not have any comments or observations to make with regards to the proposal.
- 5.0 RECOMMENDATION
- 5.1 The Committee is therefore recommended to agree the above comments, which will then be sent to South Tyneside Council in relation to application no. ST/2061/10/FUL.

Appendix 1 – Land South East of Downhill Lane – Location Plan



Appendix 2 – Land South East of Downhill Lane – Proposed Block Plan



CONSULTATIONS FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS – GATESHEAD COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's agreement to responses about to be made to consultations from neighbouring Councils about planning applications affecting sites close to the common boundary with the City of Sunderland.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Where the Council is consulted by a neighbouring authority on planning applications in its area which may have an impact on Sunderland's interests, the approval of the Planning and Highways Committee is required to agree the form of the proposed response.

3.0 CURRENT CONSULTATION (REF. 11/00366/CAA) AND RESPONSE

- 3.1 Sunderland City Council has recently been consulted by Gateshead Council on the planning application which is detailed below. The City Council's reference is 11/00366/CAA.

- 3.2 **Notifying Authority:-** Gateshead Council

Application no:- DC/11/00110/FUL
Applicant:- Northumbria Police Authority

Proposal:- Erection of building to provide firearms support unit, firearms training facility, ancillary office and training accommodation, external driver training area and associated parking.

Location:- Plot 1B, Follingsby Park, Follingsby Avenue, Felling, Gateshead

- 3.3 The proposal seeks to erect a new 6364 sq.m. facility on a vacant site on the southern edge of the Follingsby Park Industrial Park, which lies just to east of the A194(M), about 150m to the north of the Gateshead/Sunderland boundary and adjacent to the approved Green Belt. The 2.44 ha plot lies to the north of Follingsby Lane and south of Follingsby Avenue. Land to the east and north has already been developed and a small vacant site will remain to the west (see Appendix 1)

- 3.4 The proposal seeks the erection of a new regional centre for Northumbria Police to provide improved driving and firearms training facilities. The facility would replace existing outmoded facilities in Jarrow, Ponteland and West Whelpington. The proposal would see the vacant site on the industrial park developed with buildings of a similar type to those already built on the industrial park providing employment for some 104 staff. Outline consent for the industrial park was granted in December 1993 for B1, B2 and B8 uses.
- 3.5 The development comprises two principal elements. The first is the firearms support unit, which consists of a two-storey building located on the eastern part of the site, which will accommodate firearms ranges, a hydra suit and ancillary accommodation such as offices, meeting rooms and a gym. It will also include a secure vehicle car parking area for operational vehicles. This building has been arranged around two 60 metre indoor firing ranges, which sit one on top of the other, along the western elevation. The building has a total floorspace of 5594 sq m. The height of the building is similar to a number of the larger warehouse units within Follingsby Park, at approximately 12 metres to the top of the stacked ranges
- 3.6 The second element comprises an external tactical driver-training facility of some 770 sq.m., located on the western part of the site that will consist of a series of stage set blocks to provide a simulation of various street scene scenarios. It will provide the opportunity to train for approach and entry into buildings for a range of situations and building types. To ensure privacy, this will be located behind a secure three metre fence.
- 3.7 The exterior of both elements will be clad in materials similar to those used extensively throughout Follingsby Industrial Park.
- 3.8 Through the use of a solar water heating array, rainwater harvesting and lighting absence controls the scheme achieves over 15% CO2 savings compared to a typical installation of this type. The scheme therefore is sustainable in terms of energy use.

Access and Car Parking

- 3.8 Access into the site is segregated between operational vehicles and private, staff vehicles. The main access off Follingsby Avenue will provide access into the main parking area, which will provide spaces for 75 (including 4 for disabled users) private vehicles. The number of spaces has been based on a detailed analysis of shift patterns and the training courses, which will be run on the site, to assess the maximum possible occupancy of the building.
- 3.9 Operational vehicles will access the site and their own secure parking (23 spaces) compound. In addition to the car parking provision for private and operational vehicles, 14 spaces are provided on the site for cyclists and 2 for motorcycle users.
- 3.10 Access /egress to the operational parking is proposed via a secondary gate located off the eastern access road. This will provide the means of exit for

vehicles responding to an emergency call. The two points of access/egress are linked within the site to provide alternative means of leaving the site should an incident occur.

Landscaping

- 3.11 The proposals include for 0.53 hectares of the site (22%) on the southern and eastern boundaries to be subject to a programme of landscape improvements. This will consist of vegetation removal, new planting and the introduction of hedgerows and a new pond to support the existing flora and fauna on the site.
- 3.12 Following initial site surveys, it was revealed that the proposed site supports populations of *Triturus cristatus* (Great Crested Newt) within ponds and surrounding habitats. Great Crested Newts are protected under British and European law, and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Subsequently, the proposed landscape strategy has been shaped by the combined objectives of providing a successful habitat in which Great Crested Newts can be protected and prosper, while also supporting a functional site that meets the needs of the Police Authority.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The principle of the development is considered to be acceptable. The key issues to consider in relation to this proposal from the City Councils perspective are:
- (i) the visual impact of the proposal on the Green Belt;
 - (ii) the potential impact on highway safety; and
 - (iii) the potential noise impacts from the use.
- 4.2 In terms of the impact on visual amenity it is considered that as the design of the buildings is similar to those existing both on this industrial park and other similar sites within the city that these will not be significant. However, it should be borne in mind that the site is very close to the Tyne and Wear Green Belt boundary and new developments should not detract from the visual amenity of the Green Belt. The impact of the buildings and enclosures when viewed from the green belt can be reduced through sensitive landscaping. Gateshead Council should therefore be requested to ensure that the landscaping scheme for the site helps to mitigate any adverse impact on the Green Belt.
- 4.3 The proposal was accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, which indicate that the existing highway network is sufficient to cater for the envisaged traffic likely to be generated by the proposal. It is considered that by reducing the need for travel between the three existing facilities the proposed unit will be more sustainable in transport terms. It is not considered therefore that the proposal is likely to have any adverse impact on highway safety within the city council's boundary.
- 4.4 The Executive Director of City Services – Street Scene has commented that the nearest residential receiver is Follingsby Lane Farm, some 200m to the southeast of the site. The nearest residential receivers lying within the bounds of the City of

Sunderland are those houses on Dalmahoy, Washington some 1000m to the southwest. The nearest commercial receiver is the George Washington Golf Course some 500m to the south.

- 4.5 The applicants have provided a noise assessment which considers the potential impacts of the proposed development on local residential and industrial receivers external to the development. In order to facilitate this, noise measurements were taken at an existing outdoor firing range during a firearms division training session. The assessment has used this data, assuming that firearms practice would be spread over a 7.5 hour period, and calculating anticipated noise levels at local receivers including Dalmahoy and the George Washington Golf Course.
- 4.6 In addition to indoor training it is understood that stun devices are proposed for use in the driver training area at the proposed site. The devices used are to be “9 bang” devices, which let off 9 bangs at approximately 0.5 second intervals. In addition, “1 bang” devices will be used. Measurements of stun devices were taken for use in the assessment, again during a firearms division training session to allow modelling to take place to assess the likely impact of noise at sensitive receptor sites. At the height of training Northumbria Police intend to use 9 bang stuns on two days per week for two to three hours. Other pyrotechnics including single shot devices would be used infrequently e.g. once or twice a year.
- 4.7 Additionally, it is anticipated that during driver training a number of cars will be used in street scenario training with various types of police operations undertaken. The worst case noise levels in any hour and maximum noise levels at local receivers from public order training events has been calculated based on internal noise levels and noise at local receivers subsequently modelled and assessed.
- 4.8 Of particular interest to Sunderland City Council are those levels predicted at Receiver Position 5 (Dalmahoy, Washington) and Receiver Position 8 (George Washington Golf Course). During the daytime, noise levels of 61dBL_{Aeq 1 hour} are predicted during stun device activity. This is 20dB above Gateshead MBC's criteria of 10dB below background (or 10 dB above existing background noise levels). During stun device activity L_{Amax} levels are 19dB higher than the highest existing. With no stun activity there are no exceedances of criterion noise levels. During the evening and night time there are no predicted issues, due to there being no plan for driver training during these periods.
- 4.9 Noise levels of 77.2dBL_{Aeq 1 hour} as predicted at George Washington Golf Course during stun device activity. These are 22dB above Gateshead Council's criterion. L_{Amax} levels are 26dB higher than the existing highest measured maximum. With no stun activity there are no exceedances of criterion noise levels. At night time there are no predicted issues, due to there being no plan for driver training at night.
- 4.10 It appears that the element of the operations most likely to give rise to noise levels which exceed existing background noise levels are those associated with proposed stun activities, without which there is unlikely to be any adverse impact at noise sensitive receptors within the City of Sunderland. However, it is understood that this is an integral component of the proposed training centre and

that these activities are likely to take place twice weekly for 2-3 hours at a time, during which time noise is unlikely to be continuous. As such, it may be considered appropriate to impose conditions regarding the hours of operations and frequency of occurrence of stun activities on any granted consent. It is noted that the noise assessment concluded that further discussions were required with the local authority in respect of possible mitigation measures and arrangements for informing local residents and businesses of the timing of the use of stun devices.

5.0 CONCLUSION.

- 5.1 In view of the issues raised above it is recommended that Sunderland City Council advise Gateshead Council that the comments in respect of landscaping and noise be noted and that it takes steps to ensure that any adverse impacts on the visual amenities of the Green Belt and from noise generation from the site are kept to an acceptable minimum through the imposition of appropriate conditions on any consent issued.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Committee is therefore recommended to agree the above comments, which will then be sent to Gateshead Council in relation to application no. DC/11/00110/FUL.

[illegible]

CHARGING FOR PLANNING PRE APPLICATION ADVICE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend that Committee endorses a scheme of charges for planning pre application advice to commence on 1 April 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The discretionary powers allowing planning authorities to charge for providing pre application advice are contained within the Local Government Act 2003. Despite provisions contained within the Act to implement a charging scheme, take up around the country has been varied.

- 2.2 In Sunderland, a key tenet of the development control service improvement plan to improve performance in terms of speed of application processing, necessary to remove the service from the control of the Planning Standards Authority was a strong emphasis upon early engagement through pre application discussion. The early involvement allowed identification and often resolution of potential problems before submission of application and the imposition of statutory time constraints. A charge for the advice was not levied at that time as it was felt that it could act as a deterrent to early engagement, thereby affecting performance improvement.

- 2.3 The pre application advice sought by clients is varied and ranges from minor works such as advising on garden fences and house extensions through to advising on major schemes such as regeneration projects and city centre developments.

- 2.4 A customer forum was held on 9 February 2011 to which regular users of the planning service were invited. Details of the proposal were outlined and whilst some concerns were expressed around the introduction of a charging scheme, most accepted that there was need to address the growth in enquiries to preserve the quality of the planning application process.

- 2.5 Within the Tyne and Wear region South Tyneside Council has operated a charging scheme for a number of years, Newcastle City Council introduced a scheme in September 2010 and both North Tyneside and Gateshead Councils are to introduce schemes from 1 April 2011.

3.0 THE CASE FOR CHARGING

- 3.1 Local planning authorities expend considerable resources in providing pre application advice, recognising such early advice as a key part of achieving high quality in terms of application submission, overall building design and speed of decision.

- 3.2 In Sunderland in recent years the number of requests for pre application advice across all categories of application ie major, minor and other has risen from 1151 in 2005/2006 to 2085 received in 2009/2010.
- 3.3 Much of the increase in volume has been identified as speculative in nature and not ultimately leading to a planning application. The additional workload places a considerable strain not only upon the provision of good quality and timely pre application advice but also on the ability to determine submitted planning applications in accordance with statutory timescales.
- 3.4 Also from monitoring and scrutiny of financial data the cost of providing the pre application advice has risen to £187,000 for financial year 2009/2010. Clearly as the Council seeks to achieve efficiencies in line with budget reductions, review of the current free system is timely.
- 3.5 Information obtained from those authorities currently charging for pre application advice is that charging helps to deter those speculative proposals thus saving valuable officer time and considerable cost which can then be directed towards adding value to and enhancing more viable proposals.
- 3.6 Previous concerns about the potential unintended impact of charging for a pre application service leading to the submission of planning applications with no discussion in advance is now less of an issue in terms of delay. The demise of CAA external inspection and planning delivery grant around speed determination performance indicators shifts the emphasis from time driven decision making towards quality of design and other outcomes.
- 4.0 DETAILS OF THE SCHEME
- 4.1 The scheme of charges employs the “user pays” principle as its basis and sets a scale to recover the cost of providing the service. Whilst the council encourages participation in the scheme, pre applications engagement is not compulsory and accepts that it may not be appropriate in all situations.
- 4.2 The charges schedule sets out development types A (Large scale major development), B (Small scale major development), C (Minor development) and D (Other development) in line with categories as prescribed by Communities and Local Government.
- 4.3 Advice is available in two stages in respect of categories A, B and C. Stage 1 (Development in Principle) aims to provide an initial assessment and advice to establish the principles of developing a site for a particular purpose. Stage 2 (Full submission) will provide more detailed discussion, consultation as appropriate and a comprehensive written response to the proposal. The scale of charges reflects the step change in level of advice provided.
- 4.4 Category D submissions which include householder developments will receive a full written response and will be dealt with in one submission. Also within Category

D it will be possible for certain types of development to receive a quotation on request.

- 4.5 Timescales for responding to pre application advice submissions will be set with realistic targets to ensure that service users not only receive good quality advice, but that they receive it in a timely fashion.
- 4.6 Pre application advice is given without prejudice, and whilst the advice may be considered as a material consideration in respect of any subsequent planning application it cannot be held to bind the council in its formal determination of a planning application. In cases where planning applications are submitted more than 6 months after the advice has been given, where the proposed scheme has changed, or where there has been a change in local or national planning policy, it may be the case that little or no weight is given to the pre application advice given.
- 4.7 Full details of the scheme are available in a Pre Application Advice Customer Charter, a copy of which is appended to this report.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Committee is recommended

: to endorse the proposal to introduce a scheme of charges for planning pre application advice details of which are contained within the Pre Application Advice Customer Charter.

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL PRE-APPLICATION CHARGES CHARTER

1st April 2011

Sunderland City Council Pre Application Advice Service

Sunderland City Council is committed to providing an efficient, effective and customer focused pre application planning advice service, which supports and leads applicants and developers through the planning process to ensure that high quality developments can be delivered.

This service is not compulsory and may not be appropriate in all situations. However, open and constructive pre-application discussions are an opportunity for the Council and developers to work together to achieve developments that deliver benefits to the community and the economy. This can save time and costs and optimise the potential of a site. For these reasons Sunderland City Council encourages discussion on proposals before a planning application is formally submitted.

The benefits of pre application advice

There are many advantages of pre application advice, some of which are detailed below:-

- It gives an opportunity to understand how our policy will be applied to the development and can indicate that a proposal has little or no realistic chance of success, so saving considerable time and money.
- It may lead to a reduction in time spent in engaging professional advisers in working up the proposals in more detail as it can identify issues before an application is submitted.
- It can help prevent costly and time consuming amendments to schemes at a later date.
- It can identify at an early stage whether any specialist advice is needed, e.g. with regard to listed buildings, trees, flood risk, highways etc.
- It can provide opportunities to discuss details of the proposal such as its design and the materials to be used.
- It can give an opportunity to meet with all relevant council officers who may need to discuss your application.
- It can provide assistance on what you need to provide in order to ensure compliance with the planning application validation process.
- It can provide information in relation to our decision making procedures.

How to obtain pre-application advice

In order that we can manage the process, all enquiries should be submitted on the pre-application advice forms, indicating the development defined as **A, B, C** or **D** on the charges schedule. If your enquiry relates to category **A, B**, or **C** you must indicate on the form if you have chosen to engage at **Stage 1 or 2**.

You must also enclose the appropriate fee and documents as described on the pre application enquiry information checklist.

On receipt of your enquiry, it will be acknowledged and given a unique reference. The acknowledgement will inform of the date by which you can expect to receive a response and the name and contact details of the planning case officer who will be dealing with your enquiry.

Pre application advice forms can be obtained from:-

- www.sunderland.gov.uk (Planning)
- Telephone:- 0191 520 5506
- Email:- dc@sunderland.gov.uk
- Writing to: - Building and Development Control Services
P O Box 102
Civic Centre
Sunderland
SR2 7DN

The scheme of charges

Under powers contained within the Local Government Act 2003, charges will come into effect on the **1st April 2011**. The charges have been set at a level to recover the cost of service provision.

For pre application advice in [Categories A, B and C](#) (see schedule) a two stage option will be offered, and will be charged as shown in the charges schedule. Stage 1 is a set charge and Stage 2 the charge is set at a level equivalent to 15% of a projected planning application fee. The total charge for Stage 2 will be the set sum for Stage1 plus the charge at Stage 2. The charge covers the administration cost, officer time for research, assessment, site visit as necessary and a written response.

For [Category D](#) developments (see schedule). Charges will be either based on a set charge or upon request depending on the scale and nature of the development.

Pre-application charges are not refundable and are not discounted from any subsequent formal planning submission.


Stage 1 Development in Principle will aim to provide an initial assessment and advice to establish the principles of developing a site for a particular purpose. Limited internal consultation will take place. Although external consultation will not normally be carried out at this stage. It may include if necessary one meeting either on site or in the office with the case officer, whichever is more appropriate and a written response to the enquiry.

Stage 2 Full submission can either follow on from Stage 1, or if sufficient information is available to engage at Stage 2 without going through Stage1 first. Stage 2 will allow for more detailed discussions and may involve consultees as appropriate, and may cover matters such as legal agreements and scoping studies. It will include meetings as appropriate and a comprehensive written response to the pre-application proposal. It will also include a meeting to discuss planning application validation procedures prior to submission of a formal planning application.

In addition to carrying out discussions with the Council, developers and applicants are advised to undertake independent consultations with stakeholders/interested parties such as the Parish Council and local residents in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and 1 App Guidance. If stakeholder concerns have been addressed and their input recognised, this is likely to result in the more efficient handling of the planning application.

Category D submissions will aim to provide a full written response to the pre-application proposal you have submitted.

The service timescales

Categories A, B, or C Development in Principle Submission Stage 1:	Categories A, B, or C Full Submission Stage 2:	Category D Developments
<p>Our aim is to respond within 20, working days of receipt of all information necessary to validate your enquiry. You should also be aware that under this procedure officers will not comment on detailed plans. The aim is simply to identify relevant planning policies, constraints and other material considerations.</p> <p>In the event that this is not possible to respond within 20 working days due to the size, complexity or nature of the development you will be advised accordingly and an agreeable timescale set.</p> <p>The feedback will be of a more general nature than in the case of a full submission because the level of information available to the planning officer will be limited, so you need to decide which option is best suited to your enquiry.</p> <p>Please note that if a Development in Principle Submission contains detailed information it will not be registered as such, and you will be advised accordingly. You will be directed to resubmit as a Full submission with the additional charge.</p>	<p>Our aim is to respond within 30 working days of receipt of all information necessary to validate your enquiry. In the event that this is not possible due to the size, complexity or nature of the development you will be advised accordingly and an agreeable timescale set.</p> <p>For strategic large scale major developments it may be appropriate to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement in order that the pre application enquiry can be project managed to timescales that suit all involved. The charge will be calculated in line with the charges schedule.</p> <p>Further information on our Planning Performance Agreement Charter</p> <p>View the  Planning Performance Agreement Charter [228kb] here.</p>	<p>Our aim is to respond within 15 working days of receipt of all information necessary to validate your enquiry.</p> <p>In the event that this is not possible due to the size, complexity or nature of the development e.g. minerals, you will be advised accordingly and an agreeable timescale set.</p>

Pre application Enquiry Information Checklist:-

Information required to validate an enquiry.

Categories A, B, or C Development in Principle Submission Stage 1:	Categories A, B, or C Full Submission Stage 2:	Category D Developments
<p>In the case of a request for Development in Principle advice it will be necessary to complete the form, and provide a location plan, scaled site plan/drawings and any photographs of the site and its surroundings.</p> <p>In the event that information is missing or incomplete it will not be possible to process your enquiry until all necessary information has been provided.</p>	<p>In the case of a Full Submission you must complete the form, and provide sufficient supporting information to enable the Council to provide a good standard of advice. The minimum requirement for supporting information is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed application form • A location plan to scale. • A Site Plan to scale. • Photographs and sketch drawings to scale showing the existing site, buildings and trees. • Plans/Sketch drawings to scale showing the layout, height and scale of the development. • Outline plan of proposed buildings to scale. • Draft design and access statement (this should be a contextual survey and analysis of the constraints and opportunities). <p>In the event that information is missing or incomplete it will not be possible to process your enquiry until all necessary information has been provided.</p>	<p>In the case of a request for development in category D advice it will be necessary to complete the form, and provide a location plan, scaled site plan and any scaled plans/sketches necessary to describe the development also if applicable photographs of the site and its surroundings.</p> <p>In the event that information is missing or incomplete it will not be possible to process your enquiry until all necessary information has been provided.</p>

Disclaimer

We will make every effort to ensure that the advice given and the process is as accurate as possible. However pre-application views and opinions are given without prejudice.

Any advice given by council officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the council with regards to any future planning applications, which will be subject to wider consultation or publicity. Whilst the advice may be a material consideration, it cannot be held to bind the council in its validation or formal determination of a subsequent application.

If an application is subsequently submitted which fails to take on board advice given by officers, then the council may refuse it without further discussion with the applicant or their agent.

Please note applications where the proposal or scheme has changed or there has been a change in national or local planning policy or if the planning application is submitted more than six months after the advice has been given, it may be the case that little or no weight will be attached to pre-application advice given.





Advice on whether or not development requires planning permission

Always check if you need planning permission.

You may wish to visit the Planning Portal website for guidance: [Permission needed?](#)
(External link opens in a new window)

Alternatively you can use the “Do I need Planning Permission” PE forms below to ask us for informal advice about your proposals. The charge for this service is £20 + VAT, and the PE forms can be obtained from the council's planning website.

Downloads (external link, opens in a new window)

-  PE1 Pre-Application Enquiry Form (Householder Extensions/Alterations) [47kb] [Subscribe]
-  PE2 Pre-Application Enquiry Form (Change of Use of a Building) [38kb] [Subscribe]
-  PE3 Pre-Application Enquiry Form (Change of Use Land) [37kb] [Subscribe]
-  PE4 Pre-Application Enquiry Form (Fence and Boundary Enclosure) [30kb] [Subscribe]

Pre application Advice - Charges Schedule

Development Type		Stage 1	Stage 2
Code	A) Largescale Major Developments	Development in Principle	Full Submission Note(*)
Q1	Dwellings (200 or more)(4 ha or more)	£ 700 + VAT for each site	cost based on 15% of the potential Planning Fee
Q2	Offices / R & D / light industry (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)		
Q3	General Industry/storage/warehousing (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)		
Q4	Retail distribution and servicing (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)		
Q5	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)		
Q6	All other largescale major developments (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)		
B)Smallscale Major Developments			
Q7	Dwellings (10 - 199) (0.5 ha and less than 4 ha)	£ 500 + VAT for each site	cost based on 15% of the potential Planning Fee
Q8	Offices/ R & D / light industry (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)		
Q9	General Industry/storage/Warehousing (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)		
Q10	Retail distribution and servicing (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)		
Q11	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)		
Q12	All other smallscale major developments (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)		
C)Minor Developments			
Q13	Dwellings (1-9) (Less than 0.5 ha)	£ 200 + VAT for each site	cost based on 15% of the potential Planning Fee
Q14	Offices / R& D / light industry (< 1000 or 1ha)	£ 75 + VAT for each site	
Q15	General Industry/storage/warehousing (< 1000 or 1ha)		
Q16	Retail distribution and servicing (< 1000 or 1ha)		
Q17	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (< 1000 or 1ha)		
Q18	All other minor developments (< 1000 or 1ha)		
D)Other Developments			
Q19	Minerals Processing (Only M101D, MA06A, TR05B)	20% of Planning Fee + VAT	
Q20	Change of Use	£65 + VAT	
Q21	Householder developments	£30 + VAT	
Q22	Advertisements	£35 + VAT	
Q23	Listed building consents (to alter/extend)	Quote on Request	
Q24	Listed building consents (to demolish)	Quote on Request	
Q25	Conservation area consents	Quote on Request	
Q26	Certificates of lawful development	Quote on Request	
Q27	Notifications (e.g. OHL,DEM,TEX,AGR)	Quote on Request	

Note (*) Pre application enquiries which enter directly at Stage 2 must also pay the charge of Stage1.

Note "DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION" enquiries will be charged at **£20 + VAT**

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive.****1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework.
- 1.2 The committee's comments will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 9th March 2011, where approval will be sought to endorse the Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework as the basis for the production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Sunderland.

2.0 Background and current position

- 2.1 Green infrastructure, or "GI", is the network of open spaces and countryside that surrounds towns and villages and permeates through built areas. It is largely comprised of countryside, parks, natural habitats and green links such as river and stream corridors, pedestrian, cycling or other transport links.
- 2.2 Strategies for GI are encouraged and supported at national, regional and local level. National planning policy statement PPS12 identifies green infrastructure as a necessary element in ensuring the delivery of sustainable communities. Should the City Council decide to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008, an up-to-date green infrastructure strategy will help inform the CIL funding calculations and GI proposals in the city could then take advantage of the subsequent fund.
- 2.3 Local drivers for developing a Sunderland GI Strategy have been the Sunderland Strategy 2008 – 2025, the Economic Masterplan (2010) and, as requested by the Homes and Communities Agency, commitment to a GI strategy in support of the emerging "Sunderland's Housing Priorities Plan".
- 2.4 In July 2009, the Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership (A&ICP), one of the five sub-groups coming under the umbrella of the Sunderland Partnership, considered the report "A Proposal for Developing a Network of Green Infrastructure" produced by the Planning and Environment Service. This report set out initial proposals for developing the concept of a GI network in Sunderland from its initial stage to achieving action on the ground. The meeting agreed that a steering group would be established and that production of a green infrastructure strategy for the city would be included in the Sunderland Partnership's delivery plan.
- 2.5 The attached GI Strategy Framework, produced by the GI Steering Group, was considered by the A&ICP at its meeting on 17th November 2010 where it was endorsed as the basis for the production of a GI Strategy for Sunderland and recommended to the City Council for its approval.

3.0 The GI Strategy Framework in outline

- 3.1 The strategy for improving, developing, securing and maintaining a network of green infrastructure in the city will need to successfully incorporate several main strands of work. This is the 'Framework' and it encompasses:
1. Completion and evaluation of a city-wide GI audit
 2. Early on-the-ground actions
 3. Mapping of Green Infrastructure
 4. An audit of GI-related activities and programmes, for example Limestone Landscapes
 5. Production of a GI Strategy document
 6. A rolling programme of sustainable actions
 7. The development plan – the Local Development Framework (LDF)
 8. An annual monitor and review
 9. Publicising the Green Infrastructure Strategy
- 3.2 Each of the main strands is described in the Strategy Framework along with individual tables that set out key actions and dates as well as main responsibilities and cost implications. The inter-relationship between these main strands is illustrated in a figure in the document, reproduced in Appendix 1 of this report. The timeframe for production of all the strands, hence the complete strategy, extends largely over the next 12 months and can be seen in the Timeframe Matrix, reproduced in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.3 Some of the strands are already progressing:
- A Green Space Audit and mapping of green infrastructure is being completed by the council's Planning Policy Section, whilst the Area Regeneration Officers through the Area Committees are leading a process of public engagement in evaluating some 1,800 green space sites across the city. This work will be completed in February 2011 and a final audit report produced by June. The GI audit will be further enhanced by the addition of the results of a city-wide biodiversity habitat survey that was commissioned by the Planning and Environment Service in April 2010.
 - The GI Steering Group in October considered an initial list of potential GI 'early action' schemes. Further investigations to produce a GI checklist, methodology and a shortlist of schemes for submission to the A&ICP is underway.
 - The draft Sunderland Core Strategy (approved by Cabinet for consultation March 2010) includes GI policies and a GI corridor map that resulted from earlier discussions of the GI Steering Group and the A&ICP. The Core Strategy is being revised as a result of the new Government's evolving views on the development plan system with a view to reporting to Cabinet in April 2011. It is expected to retain the GI work that was included in the March 2010 version. The emerging GI Strategy will subsequently help to inform the next main LDF plan, the Allocations DPD.
- 3.4 Whilst the GI Strategy Framework sets out how an overall strategy for the city will come about, in Section 1 a proposal for a provisional 'Vision' is outlined and Section 2 includes provisional 'Principles' for GI in the city.
- 3.5 The provisional 'vision' for green infrastructure is as follows:

“The economic and social development of the city will be enhanced through its setting in surroundings of high quality green infrastructure that will be provided through a network of green spaces and links, including coastal, river and other water features, designed and managed to maximise their multi-functional potential.

- 3.6 Five main principles are proposed, summarised below (they can be read in full in Appendix 3 to this report):

Connectivity: seeking to physically connect areas of open space through corridors that incorporate the city’s most important parks, habitats, other open space features, main rivers and the coast, and linking to the countryside and adjoining districts.

Functionality: maximising the range of environmental, social and cultural functions and features within corridors and sites, such as

- Adaptation to and mitigation of effects of climate change
- Adapting open spaces to help reduce flood and drainage problems
- Improving and protecting woodland and tree coverage
- Preserving and enhancing related local heritage
- Increasing biodiversity through habitat and corridor development
- Enabling better rights of way for walking, cycling and horse riding
- Maintaining or enhancing local landscape and townscape character
- Maximizing the potential contribution to life-long learning
- Considering the potential for small scale community food production

Enhancing residential and economic communities: Seek to permeate, connect and enhance green space in residential and employment areas, the City Centre and other main functions, connecting physically, emotionally and intellectually with communities, especially to benefit areas of poor health and deprivation

High standards: set standards for high quality enhancement of the image of the city, for development of new and rejuvenated green space and water features and standards for accessibility to green infrastructure

Sustainable green infrastructure: design schemes to optimise low maintenance consistent with achieving the desired functions and quality of the site or corridor.

- 3.7 These provisional elements will be used to help develop on-the-ground GI schemes and any revisions to maintenance regimes in the interim period prior to completion of the GI Strategy document in late 2011. The GI Strategy document, which it is proposed will be produced with an element of public consultation, will include final versions of the ‘vision’ and ‘principles’.

- 3.8 Section 4 of the Framework sets out working procedures and governance of the preparation of the strategy. This will be through the Sunderland Partnership and City Council, with the A&ICP overseeing production and the Steering Group undertaking details of preparation.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework will be reported to Cabinet in March and thence the Area Committees for information. It will also be put on the

Sunderland Partnership's and City Council's web sites for information and informal comment, as well as being made available for other media publicity.

- 4.2 The Steering Group and A&ICP, assisted by the Planning Policy Section and others, will then continue to progress the strategic strands to completion.

5.0 Relevant consultations/ considerations

- a) **Financial Implications** – The report is resource neutral. Preparation of the strategy will involve staff resources but no financial implications other than costs of consultation and printing which can be found from existing budgets. Actions arising from the strategy will be subject of other individual financial decisions taken by the agencies proposing the schemes.
- b) **Legal Implications** – there are no direct legal implications of agreeing to the preparation of the GI Strategy or its provisional principles.
- c) **Policy Implications** – The provisional principles will be taken into consideration in preparing the LDF and other plans and actions.
- d) **Implications for other Services** – preparation of the GI Strategy will involve other services' representatives on the GI Steering Group, whilst the provisional principles and final strategy will have implications to some extent for all services, notably those delivering green space related schemes and improvements.
- e) **The Public** – the GI Strategy Framework document will be put on the council's web site for information, to gauge interest and to gain informal comment of the public. The GI Strategy document itself will be subject of a public consultation exercise before it is finalised, whilst the main schemes in the proposed rolling programme of actions will be subject of public engagement and consultation commensurate with the scale and type of scheme.

6.0 Recommendation

Planning and Highways Committee is requested to:

- i. Endorse the Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework as the basis for the production of a GI Strategy for Sunderland; and
- ii. Forward any other comments for consideration of Cabinet.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report to the Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership 17 November 2010
- Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework document

APPENDIX 2: GI STRANDS TIMEFRAME MATRIX

DATE	1 GI AUDIT	2 EARLY ACTIONS	3 MAPPING	4 ACTIVITY AUDIT	5 GI DOCUMENT	6 ACTIONS PROG	7 LDF	8 ANNUAL MONITOR	PUBLICITY
12.10	Site audit complete								
1.11				Complete research and document of information					
2.11	Complete workshops	Agree draft actions with Steering Group							Develop web page.
3.11		Report to A&ICP			Agree format and scope of document with SG		Corridors and policies in Core Strategy to Cabinet		
4.11	Audit analysis + GI data		Map all sites + GI functions						
5.11									
6.11	Final report to committee				Draft GI Strategy document	Scope AP programme document			
7.11									
8.11									
9.11					Publicity and consultation				
10.11								Agree indicators	
11.11					Final	Programme			

					strategy document	with input of community			
12.11									
1.12									
2.12									
3.12									
4.12									
5.12									
6.12								Produce 2011 -12 report	

Provisional Green Infrastructure Principles for Sunderland

1 *Connectivity*: seek to physically connect areas of open space; aim to have, as a minimum connecting feature, a green corridor with the capacity to incorporate a pedestrian and cycle route. Include the city's most important parks, habitats, other open space features, main rivers and the coast in the interlinked network of GI corridors. Link the main urban areas with the urban fringes and countryside and with adjoining districts.

2 *Functionality*: maximise the range of environmental, social and cultural functions and features within corridors and sites appropriate to their scale and location, i.e. optimizing potential functions but not making spaces more multifunctional for the sake of it, where resources would not last. An outline of the main functional considerations to be taken into account is given in Table 1A, whilst some matters particular to the city include:

- assisting adaptation to and mitigation of local effects of climate change
- adapting open space use so that flood risk and drainage problems can be minimised, particularly in support of critical drainage areas
- improving and protecting woodland and tree coverage, including the Great North Forest, to improve carbon sequestration and air quality, create shade and recreation value
- preserving and enhancing related local heritage
- increasing biodiversity through habitat and corridor development, looking to remove barriers to key corridors so that wildlife (and people) can move from one area to another freely and safely. In this respect particular attention should be given to the magnesian limestone grassland (of which Sunderland holds a very significant proportion of the global resource)
- adapting relevant sections of the RoW network to enable walking, cycling and horse riding for all, for recreational and utility purposes
- maintaining or enhancing local landscape and townscape character
- maximizing the potential contribution to life-long learning
- considering the potential for small scale community food production through new and improved allotments

3 *Enhancing residential and economic communities*: Seek to permeate, connect and enhance residential and employment areas, the City Centre and other main functions (such as schools), connecting physically, emotionally and intellectually with communities. Especially look at green infrastructure improvements where they can benefit areas with severe health inequalities and aspects of multiple-deprivation. Give consideration to encouraging active lifestyles and community interaction in the design of schemes and accessibility.

4 *High standards*: set standards for high quality enhancement of the image of the city, for development of new and rejuvenated green space and water features and standards for accessibility to a full range of GI across the city (including access to Accessible Natural Green Space – ANGSt) as well as for maintenance, in relation to the features and functions.

5 *Sustainable GI*: design schemes to optimise low maintenance consistent with achieving the desired function(s) and quality of the site or corridor.

Green Infrastructure Strategy Framework



Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership
February 2011


Sunderland
Partnership

SUNDERLAND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Prepared for the Sunderland Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership by the Green Infrastructure Steering Group.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

What is green infrastructure, or 'GI'?

1.1 Green infrastructure, or "GI", is the network of open spaces and countryside that surrounds towns and villages and permeates through built areas. It is largely comprised of countryside, parks, natural habitats and green links such as river and stream corridors, pedestrian, cycling or other transport links.

1.2 In February 2010 the Marmot Review "Fair Society, Healthy Lives" summed up the importance of green infrastructure in the following:

"Green space and green infrastructure improve mental and physical health and have been shown to reduce health inequalities. Green infrastructure networks reduce urban temperatures and improve drainage, reducing the risks to health associated with heat waves and flooding. Well designed and maintained green spaces can encourage social interaction, exercise, play and contact with nature. Well-designed, car free and pleasant streets encourage feelings of well-being, chance interactions and active travel; good quality and good access to public spaces contributes to pride in the community, integration and social cohesion."

1.3 GI therefore provides an infrastructure that is essential to urban living, helping towards better health, cleaner air, a more attractive living and working environment and consequently economic and social benefits. Well-developed and managed it can assist in reducing drainage and flooding problems and enrich the natural habitat of the area.

1.4 Sunderland takes a pride in its public green spaces and in 2010 again won the Britain in Bloom Best Large City award. Sunderland has a wealth of parks, countryside and open spaces: think of Mowbray Park, Herrington Country Park and Penshaw Hill; Fulwell Quarries, Washington Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre, the River Wear and the coast and beaches. A GI Strategy will help make fuller use of the benefits that these places bestow upon the city's landscape, its economy and its people and will help to identify physical, functional and perceptual links within a wider green network.

1.5 The following provisional 'vision' for green infrastructure is proposed to help focus our work to meet the City of Sunderland's future requirements. It is based on definitions published by Natural England and the Government's policy in PPS12: Local Spatial Planning:

"The economic and social development of the city will be enhanced through its setting in surroundings of high quality green infrastructure that will be provided through a network of green spaces and links, including coastal, river and other

water features, designed and managed to maximise their multi-functional potential. Sunderland's Green Infrastructure will encompass existing and new green spaces, both rural and urban. It will support active and passive recreation, natural and ecological processes, as well as enhanced transport links, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Sunderland's Green Infrastructure will thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to the wider rural hinterland and adjacent local authorities. Consequently it will be delivered at all scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within the city's local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringes and wider countryside. This Green Infrastructure will be integral to the city's environment and enhance the health, quality of life and sustainability of its communities and potential for economic development."

Benefits and functions of GI

1.6 A report published by Natural Economy North West has identified that good quality GI in towns, cities and rural areas can be of benefit to the following:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation of impacts
- Flood alleviation and water management
- Quality of place
- Health and well being
- Land and property values
- Economic growth and investment
- Labour productivity
- Tourism
- Recreation and leisure
- Land and biodiversity
- Products from the land.

1.7 Green infrastructure can provide or be adapted to accommodate many functions, as outlined in the following list. Maximising the number of potential functions in a location should be a broad aim. Most functions may be possible to a significant extent in the largest green spaces and countryside, but local conditions, needs and resources should prevail in decisions on what functions to focus upon, particularly for smaller scale sites.

Table 1A: Potential functions of GI:

Sport and active recreation	Climate change adaptability
Access to natural green space	Landscape character/sense of place
Mental and physical health	Biodiversity
Image and investment	Connectivity within a network
Land and property value	Setting for tourism
Education and life-long learning	Availability for social enterprises
Social inclusion	Food, fishery and energy production
Intrinsic value of a place to a community	Historic resource
Flood management	Setting for culture
Air water and soil quality	

Source: North West Green Infrastructure Guide

GI issues, influences and opportunities in Sunderland

1.8 In Sunderland there are issues that a GI strategy must tackle to achieve a successful outcome; there are matters where a GI strategy could be influential in achieving a more positive result; and there are initiatives that will provide opportunities for enhancing the city's GI.

1.9 Work on the Sunderland Core Strategy has identified from current reports and information, including the preliminary results of a green space audit, not only strengths but also several gaps and weaknesses in the provision of open space in the city. Information can be read in the LDF topic papers whilst the audit is discussed in more detail in Section 3. The provision or improvement of open spaces to remedy these shortfalls should preferably be undertaken through the application of GI principles (see Section 2) in designing new schemes and improvements.

1.10 A literature review has helped identify key features of GI and latest guidance and ideas on its development (see Appendix 1). In addition locally, the above-mentioned topic reports and a series of meetings with officers experienced in various aspects of GI functions and provision has helped identify GI issues, potential to influence economic and other development and opportunities for increasing GI in the city.

1.11 The main matters so identified are referred to in the boxes on the next three pages.

Main GI issues in Sunderland

- The spatial distribution and quality of green spaces is quite varied across the city. The ongoing green space audit will identify mis-matches between provision and needs
- There are no current council programmes for the provision of new parks or allotments, though they are occasionally developed as the result of an opportunity, for example Elba Park at the former Lambton Cokeworks. However, without an objective to create new parks and allotments through a range of funding and development opportunities, areas short on provision are unlikely to see their position improved
- The coast and River Wear are identified as key assets to the future prosperity of the city, supporting culture, leisure and tourism opportunities, where improvements to the environment are crucial to success
- There is some overuse of football pitches, a mismatch of use and some poor quality pitches and facilities according to the Playing Pitch Strategy 2004
- New or replacement school grounds have GI potential but for the moment these schemes and the council's influence on them has been much reduced by the demise of the Building Schools for the Future programme and the possibility of some future schools coming forward as private or community initiatives outside the control of the local authority
- 'Brownfield' land is a priority for new built development but its potential to contribute to the green infrastructure of the city should also be recognised, particularly where it has been naturalised
- Work towards LTP3 (the Local Transport Plan) has identified that public rights of way and cycle networks need linkages, both at the sub-regional and the local level.
- Barriers to linking some corridors into a complete network for both people and wildlife are major roads, particularly the A19 and A1, also the River Wear (though the latter is a natural feature of the city's wildlife ecology)
- New developments and the people who use them generally have a detrimental impact on wildlife, though through careful design and mitigation provisions a positive outcome should be possible. GI corridors running through and around development, perhaps associated with SUDS (sustainable drainage schemes), could help reduce negative impact
- The Sunderland Parks Management Strategy 2004 aims for parks improvements based on the national Green Flags Award criteria. Whilst these criteria are wide ranging they do not specifically refer to parks being improved through the application of the principles of GI: this would have to be addressed as an additional matter by the local authority
- There is a consensus amongst experienced officers that an increased ranger service would greatly assist the protection and improvements of green spaces and corridors
- The major issue for the protection of species and habitats and the improvement and management of the countryside and urban green spaces is, simply, a shortage of resources

Potential positive influences of GI in Sunderland

- A GI strategy will help introduce the concept and principles of GI into a range of local plans, master plans and strategies, such as the Housing Strategy and the emerging Allocations Development Plan Document. Its multi-functional nature will also affect future consideration of maintenance regimes
- GI can be designed/protected to mitigate storm flow in Critical Drainage Areas (defined by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) and in areas prone to flooding, also help reduce high water tables, for example north of Washington
- The strategy can improve and guide the response of the private sector and other development agencies towards the provision of good quality, well planned GI associated with new developments
- Planning for multi-functional GI could have the potential to attract a wider range of funding for delivery of schemes than might normally be associated with public open space provision
- GI can help to improve mental and physical health in the poorest areas identified by the Index of Multiple Deprivation and also be used towards breaking down educational and cultural barriers to outdoor recreation
- GI links could provide attractive, convenient and safer routes for children to walk and cycle to school away from main roads. However main routes would have to be the subject of safe design, lighting and appropriate levels of maintenance for all-year round use, whilst alternative access from them into school grounds would have to be properly located and managed
- More accessible green spaces and trees could enhance the image and attract investment, particularly in and around the City Centre, older employment areas and major transport corridors, greening the city, enhancing biodiversity and improving outdoor recreation provision
- A GI strategy can visually help to define and give a setting to local neighbourhoods
- Action to complete gaps in sustainable access around the city can be proposed through a GI strategy, e.g. cycle routes, local connectivity, improved legibility and the re-construction of inadequate green footpath networks to attract increased usage
- Broad areas of individual landscape character could be enhanced, such as the magnesian limestone escarpment through the Limestone Landscapes project
- Greater emphasis could be given to adding to the city's biodiversity habitats and improving connectivity of sites for wildlife, informed by ongoing ecological surveys across the city
- Local food production could be encouraged and enabled, connecting local communities with the land
- greater community action and local responsibility for neighbourhood green spaces can be an outcome.
- Identifying areas for calm and quietness in the city
- Supporting the city's Destination Management Plan for tourism and culture
- Supporting active lifestyles and wellness, with links to ActiveSunderland
- Supporting the Local Transport Plan's aim to improve air quality through GI, helping eliminate any future need for designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
- Supporting the setting of heritage features such as St Peter's Church

Opportunities for enhancing GI in the city

- The Homes and Communities Agency has asked authorities producing local investment plans to include an outline of their strategy for green infrastructure. Sunderland's Housing Priorities Plan is looking towards a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features, designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities
- The inclusion of green infrastructure is a requirement for the sustainable re-modelling of local communities into successful 'low carbon city villages', as proposed by the Economic Masterplan
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may be a mechanism to raise funds to deliver Green infrastructure projects. The Council is considering implementing CIL, which complements the use of planning obligations to raise funds from developers undertaking new development, to secure a wide range of infrastructure including parks and green spaces.
- The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) will include an accessibility strategy to be implemented by the individual Tyne and Wear local authorities. It will also be seeking to further develop and improve the rights of way and cycling networks. Where these works relate to GI corridors in Sunderland the funding provides an opportunity to enhance the city's GI
- The development of 'walk in the park' networks with Healthy City funding could lead to related GI improvements
- The Play and Urban Games Strategy Addendum 2010 includes proposals for 58 improved and new play areas across the city which could benefit local GI as well as take account of GI principles in their design and location
- New development and re-modelling of existing housing and employment estates can make contributions to green infrastructure through master plans, planning applications and legal agreements (S106). This already happens, for example by the provision of sections of the cycle network, new children's play parks and wildlife protection measures. However some developers see this as a hurdle to be got over through the minimum contribution, an attitude that needs to be changed
- The Football Investment Strategy has funding for a new playing pitches strategy, which could take account of GI functions in future pitch design
- Continued growth of local fora, such as the 17 Friends of Parks groups, could assist community involvement in and ownership of GI. The city Volunteer Strategy could also help enable community involvement
- The opening up of culverted or channelled streams, for example as proposed in the Seaburn Master Plan, could provide GI benefits
- Cross boundary working with neighbouring districts could secure economies of scale in the delivery of sub-regional networks

The policy context for a GI Strategy

1.12 **National:** the Government's Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning identifies green infrastructure as a necessary element in ensuring the delivery of sustainable communities. The Government agency Natural England believes that the provision of green infrastructure should be an integral part of the creation of sustainable communities throughout England. Networks of multi-functional greenspace providing a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits should be identified in local plans and designed into all major new development and regeneration schemes from the outset. To help achieve its aims, Natural England is advocating that all local authorities adopt 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) in the provision of green infrastructure (see Appendix).

1.13 The Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1, *Planning and Climate Change* (2007), sets out how climate change considerations should be integrated into all aspects of spatial planning. Vegetation can beneficially modify the climate, especially in cities, where the 'heat island effect' makes city dwellers particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures. Urban green spaces can give a cooling effect of 1-2 °C. Green roofs can make buildings cooler in summer and warmer in winter compared to traditional roofs, as well as providing habitats for wildlife.

1.14 The Planning Act 2008 included the provision for local authorities to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to raise finance needed for new infrastructure from new development. Open spaces are included within the definition of infrastructure. Should the City Council decide to introduce a CIL for Sunderland an up-to-date green infrastructure strategy will help inform the CIL funding calculations, whilst GI proposals in the city could then take advantage of the subsequent fund.

1.15 Other national policy statements, for example PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation include messages emphasising the importance of green infrastructure in the achievement of modern, sustainable urban and rural environments, with enriched biodiversity.

1.16 The importance of green infrastructure was confirmed by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's 2007 report on the Urban Environment. Latterly the consultation draft PPS "Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment" has included policies for the incorporation of proposals for GI in local development frameworks.

1.17 **The sub-region:** in 2008 the previous Government designated a number of locations across England as 'growth points', where the priority would be an

increased amount of house building as well as new employment and other infrastructure. Two growth points were created adjacent to the city in South East Durham and Newcastle & Gateshead. A requirement of growth point status is that the development proposals should be accompanied by a strategy for green infrastructure. These districts have begun their strategy preparation, which will include green corridor cross-boundary connections to Sunderland. Recently South Tyneside began the preparation of a GI strategy as a supplementary planning document to its Core Strategy. Sunderland is working with all the authorities to ensure cross-boundary connections are agreed and policies are consistent.

1.18 **City of Sunderland:** at the city level, the principal aim of the Sunderland Strategy 2008 - 2025 is:

“To ensure that Sunderland becomes a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability, protecting and nurturing both its built heritage and future development and ensuring that both the built and natural environments will be welcoming, accessible, attractive and of high quality”.

1.19 The strategy includes a key objective:

“Residential and employment areas will be set within a network of green spaces providing areas for recreation, natural habitats and attractive landscape settings. The network will link the main urban areas, the coast, river and countryside with each other and with neighbouring districts”.

1.20 Additionally it says:

“By 2025 the council and its partners will have created sustainable and environmentally friendly housing developments that open up and connect neighbourhoods with each other and to town centres and create common spaces shared by all communities”.

1.21 As part of the mechanism for delivery of the Sunderland Strategy a number of themed local strategic partnership groups has been established, including the Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership (A&ICP). This partnership agreed in 2009 to oversee the preparation of a green infrastructure strategy for the city and included the proposal as part of its contribution to the Local Area Agreement Delivery Plan.

1.22 The Sunderland Economic Masterplan, approved by the City Council in September 2010, takes a broad perspective on the future economic development of the city towards delivering the long term Sunderland Strategy. It envisages improvements to the city's green infrastructure to create or enhance connections between green assets, routes into the City Centre and to the Technopole and between City Villages.

1.23As referred to in the 'opportunities' section, the Homes and Communities Agency expects local authorities to have (or have the intention to have) a GI strategy and has asked for an outline of a strategy as part of local investment plan submissions.

Where are we now?

1.24 An open space register and map for the city was partly updated in 2003 to take account of national guidance in PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The register and map considered 10 types of open space in terms of quantity. All sites from the largest country parks down to small amenity spaces were individually included. In 2008 a major audit of the register and map commenced, also including (for the first time) a questionnaire analysis of site quality. This evaluation has still to be completed, and has yet to be scrutinised and evaluated with local communities. This audit and evaluation will complete a major strand of the Green Infrastructure Strategy as proposed in this framework and provide invaluable information for completing the strategy document.

1.25 As part of preparation of the Sunderland Core Strategy Preferred Options 2007 the City Council engaged with a wide range of local community groups to establish a green space vision for the city, in line with PPG17, which was published in the Core Strategy as follows:

“Safe, clean and valued green spaces with amenities suited to local and other needs, that are easily accessible to all within every neighbourhood particularly by foot and cycle and include elements of wildlife habitat especially provision of trees and also opportunities for physical activity (both informal and formal) particularly walking.”

1.26 Subsequently consideration of the need for a Green Infrastructure Strategy to be developed from the green space work came about as a response to Policy 9.6a of the Regional Spatial Strategy (2008). This requires districts to develop sub-regional cross-boundary networks of GI for inclusion in LDFs. The Core Strategy Preferred Options 2007 had foreseen this and included an objective to ensure that all homes have good access to a range of green spaces linked across the city connecting major parks, the riverside, the coast and adjoining districts. Whilst the future for RSS is doubtful there is also support for a GI strategy within national planning policy (PPS12 and others), from the Homes and Communities Agency via Sunderland's Housing Priorities Plan, as well as in local policy, notably the Economic Masterplan, that points to continuing with the project.

1.27 The Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership (A&ICP) in July 2009 considered a report “A Proposal for Developing a Network of Green Infrastructure”.

Subsequently a GI Strategy Steering Group was established to deliver the detailed strategy on behalf of the Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership. This group can draw on a wide range of officers from the council and other organizations (see Appendix 5) to provide input. It meets to consider the various stages of work as well as to discuss national policy directions and local on-the-ground GI proposals.

1.28 An early task was the input to and consideration of a network of inter-districts and district GI corridors and associated Core Strategy policies. As a result the basic network of corridors and policies is now included in the revised draft Core Strategy, approved by council for consultation purposes in March 2010 (see Appendix 3).

1.29 The steering group has been involved with the drafting of this GI Strategy Framework report, which has taken account also of a series of informal meetings with officers from associated disciplines, e.g. the Countryside Officer and Parks Development Manager. These meetings have helped gain a better insight into the wide range of issues a GI strategy might need to take into account.

2.0 PROVISIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR SUNDERLAND GI

2.1 A draft set of principles for GI in Sunderland was included in “A Proposal for Developing a Network of Green Infrastructure” (July 2009). After discussion and consultation with partners and other key organisations the following provisional principles are recommended as a basis for Sunderland’s GI Strategy. They may be amended as a result of wider consultations and work on the detailed GI Strategy. However, in the interim, it is recommended that the council and other organisations use them as a basis for creating GI schemes and improvements.

Provisional Green Infrastructure Principles for Sunderland

1 *Connectivity*: seek to physically connect areas of open space; aim to have, as a minimum connecting feature, a green corridor with the capacity to incorporate a pedestrian and cycle route. Include the city’s most important parks, habitats, other open space features, main rivers and the coast in the interlinked network of GI corridors. Link the main urban areas with the urban fringes and countryside and with adjoining districts.

2 *Functionality*: maximise the range of environmental, social and cultural functions and features within corridors and sites appropriate to their scale and location, i.e. optimizing potential functions but not making spaces more multifunctional for the sake of it, where resources would not last. An outline of the

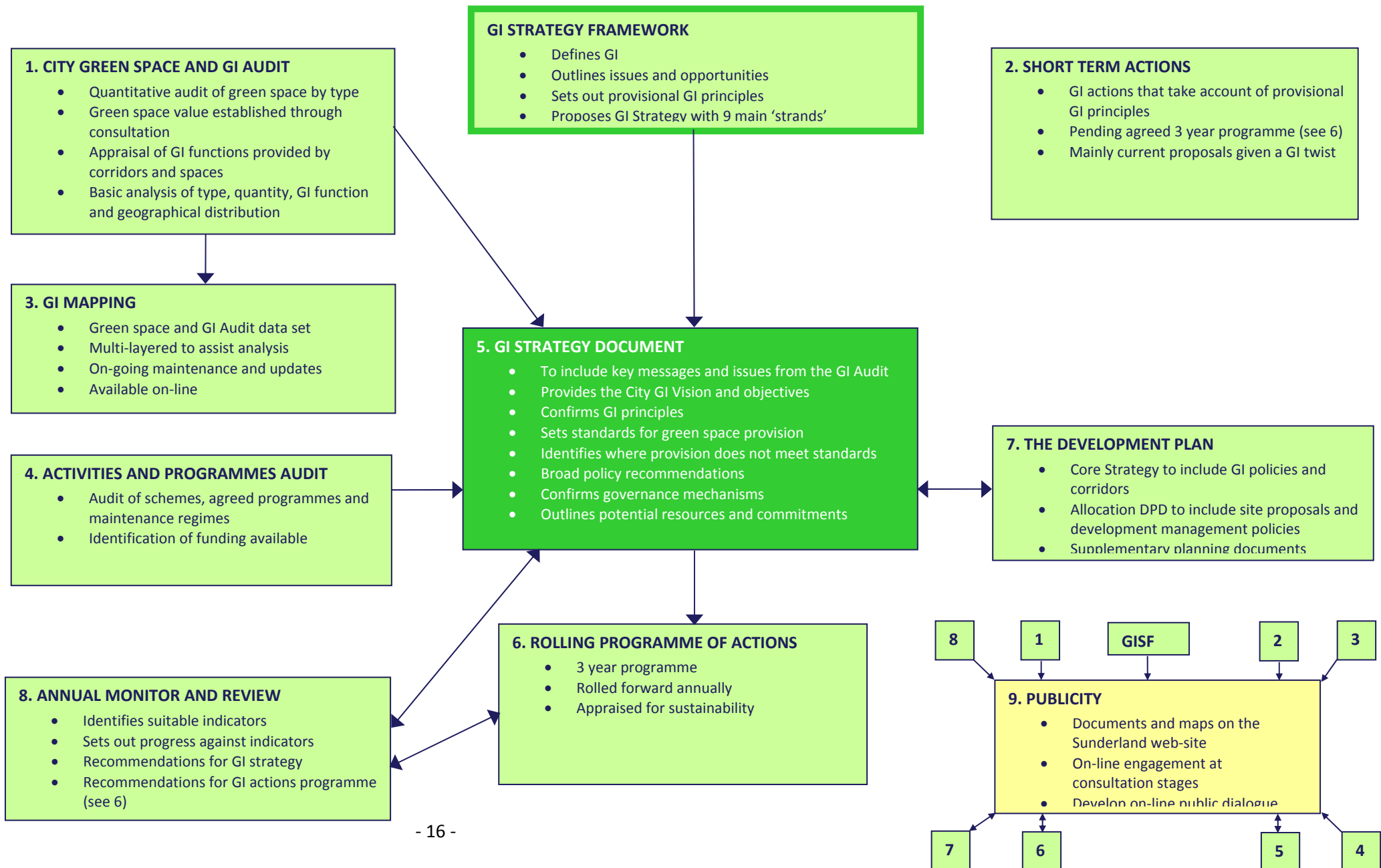
main functional considerations to be taken into account is given in Table 1A, whilst some matters particular to the city include:

- assisting adaptation to and mitigation of local effects of climate change
- adapting open space use so that flood risk and drainage problems can be minimised, particularly in support of critical drainage areas
- improving and protecting woodland and tree coverage, including the Great North Forest, to improve carbon sequestration and air quality, create shade and recreation value
- preserving and enhancing related local heritage
- increasing biodiversity through habitat and corridor development, looking to remove barriers to key corridors so that wildlife (and people) can move from one area to another freely and safely. In this respect particular attention should be given to the magnesian limestone grassland (of which Sunderland holds a very significant proportion of the global resource)
- adapting relevant sections of the RoW network to enable walking, cycling and horse riding for all, for recreational and utility purposes
- maintaining or enhancing local landscape and townscape character
- maximizing the potential contribution to life-long learning
- considering the potential for small scale community food production through new and improved allotments

3 *Enhancing residential and economic communities:* Seek to permeate, connect and enhance residential and employment areas, the City Centre and other main functions (such as schools), connecting physically, emotionally and intellectually with communities. Especially look at green infrastructure improvements where they can benefit areas with severe health inequalities and aspects of multiple-deprivation. Give consideration to encouraging active lifestyles and community interaction in the design of schemes and accessibility.

4 *High standards:* set standards for high quality enhancement of the image of the city, for development of new and rejuvenated green space and water features and standards for accessibility to a full range of GI across the city (including access to Accessible Natural Green Space – ANGSt) as well as for maintenance, in relation to the features and functions.

5 *Sustainable GI:* design schemes to optimise low maintenance consistent with achieving the desired function(s) and quality of the site or corridor.



3.0 THE SCOPE OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

3.1 The strategy for improving, developing, securing and maintaining a network of green infrastructure in the city will need to successfully incorporate several main strands of work, encompassing:

1. Completion and evaluation of a city-wide GI audit
2. Early on-the-ground actions
3. Mapping of green infrastructure
4. An audit of GI-related activities and programmes, for example.
Limestone Landscapes
5. Production of a GI Strategy document
6. A rolling programme of sustainable actions
7. The development plan
8. An annual monitor and review
9. Publicising the Green Infrastructure Strategy

Each strand of the strategy is described below with roles, responsibilities, timing and possible costs attached: Appendix 2 sets out the progression of each in a time frame.

Completion and evaluation of a city-wide GI audit.

3.2 This will be developed from the Green Space audit whose first stage of identifying, quantifying and surveying sites has been undertaken by the council's Planning Policy and Landscape teams, in accordance with the national guidance set out in PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation". The second stage of the Green Space audit requires an evaluation of community views about the existing provision and whether it meets their needs. This is a substantial piece of work that, to be robust, needs to include community engagement at a local level with local interest groups, a range of users and local people generally.

3.3 The Green Space audit process proposed by PPG17 essentially focuses on nine different main types of open space, for example public parks, or sports pitches. Assessing the quality of green infrastructure requires further examination of the range of functions that each site or corridor may provide e.g. storm water retention to reduce flooding, or providing a significant element of landscape character for an area. The audit of Green Space/Green Infrastructure is important to the completion of the Local Development Framework for the city, particularly for the Allocations Development Plan Document. This is presently programmed in the Local Development Scheme for adoption in February 2013. The initial identification of specific sites for different uses, including green infrastructure, will be undertaken in preparing the Preferred Option that is programmed to go on consultation beginning June 2011 (note: there may be

revisions to the LDF timetable to take account of the production of the Core Strategy). It is important therefore that the audit is completed to assist the timetable. In the first place a brief has been prepared outlining the scope of the survey and required skills, expertise and timetable. The audit is being undertaken by officers of the council.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Complete sites audit	By December 2010	Planning Policy	Staff time
Audit analysis	By April 2011	Planning Policy + relevant in-house expertise	Staff time
Sites value community consultation	By February 2011	Area Officers + Area Committees and Planning Policy	Staff time + consultation budget
Green Infrastructure support data	April 2011	Planning Policy	Staff time
Conclusions and report	June 2011	Planning Policy + committee endorsement	Staff time

Early on-the-ground actions

3.4 This strand is the early identification of immediate actions that can be taken by the City Council and its partners whilst other strategy strands are in preparation, i.e. applying the provisional principles of GI, as proposed earlier in this paper, to current open space improvements, maintenance regimes, transport, regeneration, housing programmes, new schemes, new strategies and plans. A GI check list will assist identification of schemes. The principles to be applied are provisional pending their agreement as part of the GI strategy document (see below).

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Identifying potential schemes from current programmes	Draft actions February 2011. Endorsement by next available A&I CP	All relevant sections and partners including GI Steering Group members, facilitated and co-ordinated by Planning Policy. Action plan to be endorsed by A&ICP.	Staff time
Review or preparation and costing of schemes to integrate GI principles	To meet appropriate programme timetable	All relevant City Council Services and partners; individual schemes to be approved by appropriate governance bodies. Overview of schemes by GI Steering Group.	Staff time and possible costs variation subject to revisions (could even involve cost reduction benefits)

Mapping of green infrastructure

3.5 The development and on-going maintenance of a GIS map-based data resource of green infrastructure will assist the council and others with its current development plan and other activities now and in the future. By mapping the different functions of greenspace, the spatial distributions of the type, quantity and quality of provision will be made clear, helping to inform existing strategies and to direct funds to where improvements are most needed. It will help provide an evidence base as well as a resource that will allow monitoring of change. A well-run and maintained mapping database will enable analysis to be made over the years of such matters as the impact of climate change on the city, or the success or otherwise of biodiversity intervention policies, etc. Consideration could be given to integrating the mapped data with other such data being compiled by the City Council's ICT Team to give a wide ranging geographically based resource, useful to a wide range of users.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Complete the mapping of all Green Space audit sites by type and other information	By April 2011	Planning Policy	Staff time
Incorporate GI function information as appropriate	By April 2011	Planning Policy + assistance from other data holders and ICT	Staff time
Maintain the data base	On-going	Planning Policy + ICT	Staff time

Audit of GI-related activities and programmes, for example Limestone Landscapes

3.6 This is essentially a documentation of current and proposed activities, programmes and maintenance schedules and standards that are aimed at creating green infrastructure or improving the nature of existing infrastructure. It will help identify current and possible future sources of funding as well as gaps. The document can be used in support of the LDF and in completing the Sunderland GI Strategy document.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Research and documentation of information	By January 2011	Planning Policy supported by other council sections and partners with input from GI Steering Group members. Report to A&ICP.	Staff time

Production of a GI Strategy document

3.7 This is the document that essentially draws together all the strands into one explanatory report. It will take into account the GI Audit results and include Sunderland's vision for GI and the final set of principles that will be applied to all schemes. It will set out provision and access standards for the distribution of GI; consideration of maintenance, supervision and public safety, proposals for enhanced connectivity and links to an ongoing action plan (see below). It will set out the main building blocks in a series of policy recommendations for the successful integration of a network of GI in the city, for its maintenance and long-term governance and resourcing. The main delivery agencies will be identified, including where GI will be expected to be delivered by the planning system. Before the document is approved by the council it will be the subject of public consultation.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Draft GI Strategy document	By June 2011	Planning Policy, through the Steering Group, to be endorsed by the A&ICP and approved for consultation by appropriate council committees	Staff time
Publicity and consultation on approved draft	By September 2011	Planning Policy assisted by the Consultation Manager	Staff time + possible limited funding from consultation budgets
Final strategy document	By November 2011	Planning Policy, through the Steering Group, to be endorsed by the A&ICP and approved by Cabinet and City Council	Staff time

A programme of sustainable actions

3.8 The actions and their individual priority and timescale will be included in a 3-year rolling programme linked with the main GI building blocks identified in the strategy document. Main likely sources of funding will include delivery mechanisms such as agri-environmental schemes, Section 106 planning agreements, public parks improvements etc and key participants, linked to the responsibilities of departments and organisations. The schedule will be rolled forward as part of the annual monitor and review of the GI Strategy. Main actions included in the programme, both in principle and in detail, will be subject to a community engagement process relevant to its scale and function involving, as appropriate, local people, schools, businesses and other interests. The actions will be assessed through a non-statutory form of sustainability

appraisal, on a similar basis to the appraisal designed for the Sunderland Strategy.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Scope the content of the document	By June 2011	Planning Policy + GI Steering Group	Staff time
Produce the action programme through community engagement, including its sustainability appraisal	By November 2011	Co-ordinated by Planning Policy assisted by Area Officers and Area Committees. Endorsed by A&ICP and approved by appropriate committees	Staff time + some funding from consultation budgets
Produce annual revisions	To follow each annual monitor	Co-ordinated by Planning Policy assisted by Area Officers and Area Committees. Endorsed by A&ICP and approved by appropriate committees	Staff time + some funding from consultation budgets

The development plan

3.9 The development plan – the Local Development Framework - will essentially: 1) identify strategic GI corridors and include spatial planning policies for the development of GI in the city through the LDF Core Strategy (a revised draft is in the process of being approved for consultation – see Appendix 2) and: 2) define in the LDF Allocations Plan the green infrastructure sites and areas to be enhanced, protected or created. The development plan strand may also include the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents that give more detail to supplement the development plan policies and how they might be applied to new developments, including details of delivery through the development process.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Include proposed GI Corridors and related GI policies in the Revised Preferred Options for consultation	Cabinet and City Council approval of CS for consultation March 2011	Planning Policy	Staff time + LDF consultations budget
Progress the draft Core Strategy through its statutory procedures for adoption	In line with a revised Local Development Scheme	Planning Policy	Staff time
Identify and prepare GI supplementary planning documents	As appropriate	Planning Policy	Staff time

An annual monitor and review

3.10 An annual monitor and review of the strategy and actions will be undertaken, to include recommendations necessary to ensure the evolving strategy continues to be effective and successful. Some indicators of evaluating success could be: increasing % of population having the basic Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) criteria met; increasing the % of sites having Country Park Accreditation/ green flag status, etc.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Identify and agree indicators for monitoring	By November 2011	Planning Policy + GI Steering group	Staff time
Produce report and recommendations	By June 2012 (first report to look back at previous financial year)	Planning Policy with information input from GI Steering Group representatives. Reported to A&ICP and relevant committees	Staff time

Publicising the Green Infrastructure Strategy

3.11 This would involve a publicity strand including use of the City Council web site and other electronic means. It should seek to not only publicise the developing strategy, including the initial approval by the City Council of this strategy framework, but also seek to engage the public and organisations to give opinions and ideas for local GI. In particular it would use a variety of means to reach local people.

ACTION	TIMETABLE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST IMPLICATION
Develop a page as part of the Sunderland web-site	By February 2011 to be in place for publication of this GI Strategy Framework	Planning Policy with Communications and ICT assistance	Staff time
Use the site as appropriate for publicity, consultation and community engagement exercises	As necessary	Co-ordinated through Planning Policy	Staff time
Media publicity as appropriate	As necessary	Planning Policy and others via Communications	Staff time

4.0 WORKING PROCEDURES, GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

4.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be published by the Sunderland Partnership and Sunderland City Council, with its production being overseen through the Attractive and Inclusive City Partnership. Detailed work will be undertaken by the GI Steering Group. This is already in place and meets to consider the main documents, schemes and other relevant information. The steering group will report to A&ICP at key stages identified in Section 3 of this Framework. As the strategy develops from the planning stages through to detailed development and specific on-the-ground actions the composition of the steering group could change to suit the work.

4.2 It is also suggested that as the strategy develops and gains momentum consideration should be given to whether a small coordinating team (one or two officers) should be established. This would benefit the process of embedding delivery of GI in the council and LSP culture, ensuring joined-up thinking and actions as well as providing a focus for reporting.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Green infrastructure literature

Appendix 2 – Timeframe matrix

Appendix 3 – Green infrastructure in the 2010 Core Strategy

Appendix 4 – Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

Appendix 5 – Green Infrastructure Steering Group (at December 2010)

APPENDIX 1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE LITERATURE

The following literature has helped inform the preparation of this strategy framework.

NATIONAL POLICY AND STUDIES

- PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS1 Supplement “Planning and Climate Change”
- PPS3 Housing
- PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS12 Local Spatial Planning
- Draft PPS “Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment”
- The Marmot Review “Fair Society, Healthy Lives” 2010
- The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report “Urban Environment” 2007

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL POLICY AND STUDIES

- Regional Spatial Strategy – The North East of England Plan 2008
- Durham Biodiversity Action Plan 2006
- Durham Heritage Coast Plan
- Tyne and Wear Nature Conservation Strategy 1996
- Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan
- Groundwork - Concluding Comments: North East Community Forests and Green Infrastructure 2009
- South Tyneside Core Strategy 2007
- North East Wildlife Trusts – “Living Landscapes”
- Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy

LOCAL POLICY AND STUDIES

- A Proposal for Developing a Network of Green Infrastructure 2009
- The Sunderland Strategy 2008 – 2025
- Sunderland Unitary Development Plan 1998
- Core Strategy Preferred Options 2007
- Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options 2010
- Parks Management Strategy 2004
- Allotments Management Strategy 2004
- Allotments Review 2010
- The Playing Pitch Strategy 2004 – 2011
- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2005
- Play and Urban Games Strategy Addendum 2010
- Football Investment Strategy
- Volunteer Strategy
- Draft Landscape Character Assessments 2006
- Economic Masterplan 2010
- LDF Green Space Topic Paper 2009
- LDF Coast and River Topic Paper 2009

- LDF Countryside Topic Paper 2009

GI GUIDANCE AND STRATEGY STUDIES

- Natural England Green Infrastructure Guidance 2009
- Natural England North East – ANGSt Standards 2009
- Natural England – Coastal Access consultation 2009
- Natural England – Coastal Access Approved Scheme 2010
- Natural England – ‘Nature Nearby’ Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance 2010
- North West Green Infrastructure Guide
- CABI/National Housing Federation – “Decent Homes Need Decent Spaces”

APPENDIX 2: GI STRANDS TIMEFRAME MATRIX

DATE	1 GI AUDIT	2 EARLY ACTIONS	3 MAPPING	4 ACTIVITY AUDIT	5 GI DOCUMENT	6 ACTIONS PROG	7 LDF	8 ANNUAL MONITOR	PUBLICITY
12.10	Site audit complete								
1.11				Complete research and document of information					
2.11	Complete workshops	Agree draft action with Steering Group							Develop web page.
3.11		Report to A&ICP			Agree format and scope of document with SG		Corridors and policies in Core Strategy to Cabinet		
4.11	Audit analysis + GI data		Map all sites + GI functions						
5.11									
6.11	Final report to committee				Draft GI Strategy document	Scope AP programme document			
7.11									
8.11									
9.11					Publicity and consultation				
10.11								Agree indicators	
11.11					Final strategy document	Programme with input of community			
12.11									
1.12									
2.12									
3.12									
4.12									
5.12									

6.12								Produce 2011 -12 report	
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APPENDIX 3: SUNDERLAND CORE STRATEGY MARCH 2010 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective

18. Green infrastructure

To ensure that all homes have good access to a range of green spaces linked across the city connecting major parks, the riverside, the coast and adjoining districts

Green Space Vision

A green space vision was formulated as part of the Core Strategy community engagement work that envisages:

“Safe, clean and valued green spaces with amenities suited to local and other need, that are easily accessible to all within every neighbourhood particularly by foot and cycle and include elements of wildlife habitat especially provision of trees and also opportunities for physical activity (both informal and formal) particularly walking”.

CS1 Policy

CS1.5 Environment

b. The City Council will establish a network of green infrastructure comprised of linked open spaces and produce a strategy for its improvement that will provide an accessible context for sustainable communities and economic development sites. The interlinked green corridors will connect Sunderland’s countryside, coast, riverside and urban open spaces across the city and with neighbouring districts.

Supporting text

5.32 A network of good quality green infrastructure (GI) can assist the city in meeting several of its spatial objectives by improving land for recreation purposes, improving local access and biodiversity, assist in mitigating against climate change and enable sustainable drainage. A GI Strategy for the city will be developed to support these key objectives.

5.33 The wide variety, quality and quantity of green infrastructure in Sunderland contributes significantly towards the creation of safer, healthier and more sustainable neighbourhoods, and in turn will protect and improve citizen’s health and welfare.

5.34 The City Council seeks to complete an interconnected network of routes that enable safe and convenient movement for wildlife, walkers and cyclists. This will ensure that greenspace is easily accessible to local communities and provides a high quality environment within and around residential and other areas of the city.

CS2 Policy

The City Council will seek to ensure that Sunderland will become a more sustainable city, with a strong sense of place, by creating an attractive city with a high quality built and natural environment through:

d. Protecting and enhancing inter-district green infrastructure corridors, seeking ways of establishing links where restricted in urban areas:

- i. The coast**
- ii. The River Wear**
- iii. Green Belt and open countryside west of A19**
- iv. Northern boundary Green Belt**
- v. Part of the Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle route**
- vi. Part of the Walney to Wear (W2W) cycle route**

e. Protecting, conserving and enhancing:

- i. The varied landscape character within the city, and separate identity of its settlements, through the retention of important open-breaks and wedges within and between settlements, where possible**
- ii. Valued green infrastructure (including sites designated for their geological value) to improve its quality, integrity, community value, multi-functionality and accessibility particularly in areas of identified deficiency and to increase provision in these areas. Permission for other uses on these sites will only be acceptable if robust justification is provided**
- iii. Habitats and species identified in the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP)**

f. Conserving and enhancing where necessary designated nature conservation sites, with inappropriate development being resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its local, national or international importance

g. Encouraging the retention of trees which make a valuable contribution to the character of an area through Tree Preservation Orders

Supporting text

6.48 Six inter-district green infrastructure corridors within the city have been identified (as shown on the Key Diagram):

- The Coast: a corridor incorporating land and sea, offering considerable wildlife habitat. Improved access is needed to the coast at Hendon and sensitively along the full length of coast, in line with European wildlife protection status
- The River Wear: the river estuary and its banks provide a major corridor from Roker to Fatfield and into County Durham. Providing a range of habitats including semi-natural woodland. Further access and habitat creation is feasible within Central Sunderland
- Green Belt and Open Countryside west of A19: a very wide corridor of Green Belt and open countryside extending from South Hetton northwards to the River Wear and via Nissan to South Tyneside. The corridor is bisected by major roads, and narrows at Turbine Park. Limited public access exists north-south
- Northern boundary Green Belt: straddles the Sunderland and South Tyneside boundary. There is limited habitat variety and tree cover, and limited public access west of the A19. Bisected by major roads
- Part of the Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle route: a narrow corridor from Fatfield into County Durham. Exists as a national cycle route and provides a range of habitats within the former rail corridor
- Part of the Walney to Wear (W2W) cycle route: incorporates a former railway as well as open countryside west of Hetton, and extends into County Durham. The corridor,

which includes the Magnesian Limestone Escarpment, narrows in Hetton and is incomplete at the A182.

6.49 These corridors will build on the existing network, seeking to broaden the range and quality of functions that green infrastructure can bring to the city. Due to the nature of the corridors, which include private as well as public open space, not all will be accessible to the public.

6.50 Inter-district green infrastructure corridors will link Sunderland to the wider region. A strategic, though lower order of district corridors that have particular relevance to local communities will also be protected and enhanced, (see Policies CS6-10). The network of the green infrastructure corridors is shown on Figure 5.

6.51 The city has a diverse landscape, encompassing parts of two national landscape character areas, the Durham Magnesian Limestone escarpment and Tyne and Wear lowlands. The protection of the former is now the subject of study through the Limestone Landscape Partnership and also includes the Durham Heritage Coastline and River Wear Estuary. These areas require continued conservation, enhancement and protection where necessary. The main threats to these landscapes include new development, loss of key characteristics and loss of damage to wildlife habitat.

6.52 At a local level, the draft Landscape Character Assessment for Sunderland will be used in line with Natural England and Heritage Coast designations to provide sufficient protection for those areas of landscape that lie outside of nationally designated areas but which are also highly valued locally.

6.53 The broad extent of open breaks between settlements will be retained in order to support the development of green infrastructure, focus of development on urban areas and to help retain the distinct physical characteristics of local neighbourhoods within the city.

6.54 The city contains a wide diversity of green infrastructure that includes the coast, River Wear, large country and urban parks, regional and other sports facilities, wildlife habitat, allotment sites, play areas, cemeteries and churchyards and open countryside. Though overall provision of green space has improved over the last 15 years, the spatial distribution and quality of green space available remains varied especially in the older neighbourhoods in and around Central Sunderland. It is therefore important to protect valued green space from adverse development and create and enhance new green space where this will achieve higher quality value and greater distribution.

6.55 Whilst the City Council has quantified and surveyed almost all green space in Sunderland, in accordance with PPG17, its value to the local community is still to be established in detail through a survey to be undertaken in 2010. Experience and responses to LDF frontloading community engagement suggests that all but some minor areas of amenity space are valued. Where sites are deemed to be of low local value, opportunities to adopt or to dispose of some sites will be considered, provided that they will support the quantity of neighbouring greenspaces and facilities.

6.56 The City Council has successfully reclaimed a number of former industrial areas resulting in the creation of country parks and nature reserves such as those at Herrington and Hetton Lyons, while remediation of an opencast site led to the creation of Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve.

6.57 Due to the geology of the city, Sunderland has many sites of botanical interest and a variety of habitats of value to wildlife, including parts of two Natura 2000 sites, the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) which protects species and the Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which protects habitats. These sites are protected by European Union legislation and the impact of this plan on them has been considered in an 'Appropriate Assessment' in accordance with UK regulations.

6.58 There are also a further 17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), 10 of which are identified for both biological and geological or geomorphic value, 68 Local Wildlife Sites and five Local Nature Reserves within the city.

6.59 The City Council will continue to work in partnership with the Durham Biodiversity Partnership for the successful delivery of the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) and its key targets. The DBAP will form the primary mechanism for achieving both the UK BAP targets and regional targets, within Sunderland. Local Geodiversity Action Plans are also proposed to set out action to provide a framework for the delivery of geo-conservation.

6.60 It is recognised that survey and monitoring work could identify further sites of nature conservation value during the plan period. Such sites will be identified in the Allocations DPD.

6.61 The city has an overall low level (4%) of tree cover, considerably lower than the national average (12%) and significantly lower than the average in other parts of Europe (44%). Woodlands and trees play an extremely important role in the landscape and environmental quality of an area. It is essential that tree planting continues, that both new and existing woodlands are managed and protected to facilitate the widest range of visual, recreational, wildlife and economic benefits. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are particularly important in controlling the felling and pruning of trees or woodlands which make a significant contribution to the environment. New orders will continue to be made where trees of amenity value are at risk.

CS6 – Central Sunderland

f. Seeking to enhance existing spaces and create new public open spaces in the city centre

g. Maintaining the balance between development and conservation particularly in areas close to sensitive natural sites along the River Wear

Supporting text

10.27 The sub-area has a number of major open spaces and parks, such as Mowbray Park (which is identified as a historic park), Galleys Gill and Claxheugh which provide vital

areas of recreation and form part of wider green infrastructure corridors. However, the sub-area is restricted in terms of the quantity of available land to help increase provision and as such emphasis has been concentrated on improving the quality of existing spaces. The opportunity to create new open spaces and public squares in the city centre as part of large redevelopment schemes will be pursued.

10.28 A number of Local Wildlife Sites are located on the riverside and another at Galleys Gill. The Coast and River Wear are seen as a strategic asset and a great open space resource within the city, because of this there are often competing pressures/ demands on their use. It is important to protect the city's coastline and river corridor, including flora, fauna, geological features, heritage features, and architectural, historical and archaeological areas of interest, whilst extending the opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities.

CS7- South Sunderland

CS7.4 Environment

The City Council will seek to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the area through the following measures:

- a. Protect and enhance district green infrastructure corridors:**
 - i. Barnes Park – A19 to Eden Vale**
 - ii. Stephenson Trail – River Wear to A690/A19**
 - iii. Ryhope to Silksworth – coast to Silksworth Recreation Centre**
 - iv. Cherry Knowle to Venerable Bede and Mill Hill**
 - v. Burdon and Ryhope Dene**
 - vi. Ashbrooke to the Port- via Mowbray Park**
 - vii. Ashbrooke to Tunstall Hills**
 - viii. Claxheugh to Silksworth - via King George V park**
- b. Maintain balance between recreation and conservation particularly in areas close to sensitive natural sites along the Coast and River Wear**

Supporting text

11.14 Green space is at a premium in much of the sub-area due to the densely built-up nature of the area. Residential communities on the periphery are separated by open breaks and wedges which preserve their distinct identities.

11.15 Eight district green infrastructure corridors have been identified in South Sunderland:

- i. Barnes Park:** the park, and its extensions form a linear corridor into the heart of the urban area. It has limited habitat variety, limited tree cover and is bisected by roads
- ii. Stephenson Trail:** the trail provides a narrow corridor through the centre of Sunderland, again bisected by roads, and links to Silksworth Recreation Centre
- iii. Ryhope–Silksworth:** this settlement break provides a range of habitats and links into Tunstall Hills. Ryhope Road and the Southern Relief Road provide connectivity barriers

- iv. Cherry Knowle-Venerable Bede-Mill Hill: provides two narrow settlement breaks between Mill Hill, Silksworth and Tunstall Bank, offering limited habitat variety and tree cover. Allotments at Silksworth provide a partial connectivity break
- v. Burdon-Ryhope Dene: this corridor includes neighbouring farmland, and is mostly within Green Belt. Includes ancient semi-natural woodland
- vi. Ashbrooke to the Port: an incomplete link between Ashbrooke and the Port, utilising private gardens and school playing fields and linking to Backhouse and Mowbray Parks
- vii. Ashbrooke to Tunstall Hills: an incomplete link incorporating Southmoor and Hill View school playing fields. Limited habitat variety and tree cover
- viii. Claxheugh to Silksworth: an incomplete link incorporating King George V Park and connecting to the River Wear. The link has greater potential as a cycling corridor. Bisected by major roads.

11.16 The City Council, in association with partners and developers, will seek to ensure every corridor offers high quality, accessible and locally valued functions, thereby providing multiple benefits for both people and wildlife in the area.

11.17 The Coast and River Wear are seen as a strategic asset, and are a great open space resource within the city, often with competing pressures/ demands on their use. It is important to protect the city's coastline and river corridor, including flora, fauna, geological features, heritage features, and architectural, historical and archaeological areas of interest, whilst extending the opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities.

CS8-North Sunderland

CS8.4 Environment

The City Council will seek to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the area through the following measures:

- a) **Maintain the balance between recreation and conservation particularly in areas close to sensitive natural sites along the Coast and River Wear**
- b) **Protect and enhance district green infrastructure corridors:**
 - i. **Fulwell Quarries to River Wear- via Thompson Park**
 - ii. **A19 Corridor – Town End Farm to North Hylton**

Hylton Dene – A19 to Hylton Park

Supporting text

12.10 The Coast and River Wear are seen as a strategic asset and a great open space resource within the city; because of this there are often competing pressures/ demands on their use. It is important to protect the city's coastline and river corridor, including flora, fauna, geological features, heritage features, and architectural, historical and archaeological areas of interest, whilst extending the opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities.

12.11 Three district green infrastructure corridors have been identified in North Sunderland:

- i. Fulwell Quarries to River Wear: an incomplete link incorporating Thompson Park. Monkwearmouth provides a major connectivity barrier. Varied wildlife habitat
- ii. A19 Corridor: a narrow woodland shelter belt along the east of the A19 from Town End Farm to North Hylton. Very limited public access. The A1231 forms a major barrier
- iii. Hylton Dene: a well-wooded corridor from the A19 through Hylton Dene to the River Wear. The A1231 again forms a major barrier.

12.12 The City Council, in association with partners and developers, will seek to ensure every corridor offers high quality, accessible and locally valued functions, thereby providing multiple benefits for both people and wildlife in the area.

12.13 North Sunderland has a varied landscape including areas of arable land, parkland, Magnesian Limestone Grassland, semi natural woodlands, sandy beaches and riverbanks. The area faces pressure from residential developments, as well as public pressures, and it is therefore vital that the City Council continues to protect the natural beauty of these areas and enhancing features where possible.

CS9 Washington

CS9.4 Environment

The City Council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment of the area through the following measures:

- a) **Protect and enhance district green infrastructure corridors:**
 - i. **Springwell Village and A194M**
 - ii. **Princess Anne Park and A195**
 - iii. **A194(M) to Washington Village and River Wear**
- b) **Ensure commercial and residential development do not impact on the rural character of the north bank of the River Wear**

Protect the distinct identity of Washington New Town, protecting landscaped areas and open space from development; requiring new development to achieve and maintain the high standard of landscaping within the New Town; maintaining the separation of residential villages from other uses.

Supporting text

13.15 There is an extensive amount of high quality green infrastructure in Washington, three district green infrastructure corridors have been identified:

- i. Springwell Village-A194(M): open countryside (protected as Green Belt) forms a corridor along the west side of the A194(M), providing limited habitat variety. The corridor has limited public access and also narrows at Peareth Hall Road
- ii. Princess Anne Park and A195: a narrow corridor of grass verges and trees surround the A195 from Follingsby to Washington Village. Private gardens enable the link to connect to Glebe Park and Princess Anne Park, which then links to the River Wear
- iii. A194(M) to Washington Village and River Wear: an incomplete corridor extends from Donwell to Albany Park, Glebe Park and the River Wear. Numerous roads provide major barriers to overall connectivity.

13.16 The City Council, in association with partners and developers, will seek to ensure every corridor offers high quality, accessible and locally valued functions, thereby providing multiple benefits for both people and wildlife in the area.

13.17 Areas of Green Belt are allocated North of the River Wear aiming to protect the attractive rural nature of the riverside, emphasise the separation of uses between Fatfield and the Pattinson Industrial Estate and further prevent Fatfield from encroaching into the Wear Valley.

13.18 Washington has unique design characteristics, such as inter-village walkways, the separation of potentially conflicting land uses and the provision of substantial landscaping, particularly between main roads and residential areas. Where development or redevelopment takes place, proposals should respect the planning characteristics of town. The town has one conservation area, Washington Village.

CS10 Coalfield

CS10.4 Environment

The City Council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment of the area through the following measures:

- a) Protect and enhance district green infrastructure corridors:**
 - i. Leamside Line- Victoria Viaduct to Rainton Meadows**
 - ii. Central Route – Shiney Row to Rainton Meadows**
 - iii. Herrington Burn – Herrington Country Park to Lambton Country Park**
 - iv. Lambton Colliery Railway – Philadelphia to Lambton Country Park**
 - v. Houghton Colliery Railway – Success to Houghton town centre**
 - vi. Rough Dene Burn – Hetton Bogs to Copt Hill**
 - vii. Hazard Railway – Low Moorsley to Rainton Bridge**
 - viii. Rainton Bridge and Hetton Park**
 - ix. Southern Boundary – Pittington to Snippersgate**
- b) Pursue greater protection of agricultural land in nationally important landscape of the Magnesian Limestone Escarpment, in the southern Coalfield from inappropriate development**
- c) Measures to promote and preserve the Coalfield’s distinct identity and cultural heritage will be supported**
- d) No development will be permitted that could cause unnecessary sterilisation of Eppleton Quarry**
- e) Develop Herrington Country Park as a regional outdoor events area.**

Supporting text

14.16 There is an extensive amount of high quality green infrastructure in the Coalfield, nine district green infrastructure corridors have been identified:

- i. Leamside Line:** a corridor with varied habitat either side of the railway line linking the River Wear to Rainton Meadows. The corridor links into Lambton Country Park. Bisected by major roads
- ii. Central Route:** a settlement break and floodplain between Houghton and Fence Houses, scheduled to include a new road (the Central Route). Habitat variety and tree cover could be improved

- iii. Herrington Burn: an incomplete corridor between Herrington and Lambton Country Parks, via Herrington Burn. The A182 provides a major barrier to the corridor
- iv. Lambton Colliery railway: an incomplete and narrow corridor along the former railway. Philadelphia Workshops provide a major barrier to the corridor
- v. Houghton Colliery Railway: the former railway corridor provides a link from Lambton to Houghton town centre. The A182 provides a barrier from the corridor to the Green Belt to the east
- vi. Rough Dene Burn: a settlement break with limited public access exists between Houghton and Hetton, following the burn. The A182 provides a barrier to the corridor
- vii. Hazard Railway: open countryside that includes the former railway, extending from Low Moorsley to Rainton Bridge. The A690 separates the corridor from Rainton Meadows
- viii. Rainton Bridge and Hetton Park: a corridor along the Rainton Burn extends through Hetton Bogs and Hetton Park and on to Hetton School. This corridor offers considerable habitat variety
- ix. Southern Boundary: open countryside along the city boundary forms a corridor between Pittington and Snippersgate, south of Easington Lane. Habitat variety and public access is limited

14.17 The City Council, in association with partners and developers, will seek to ensure every corridor offers high quality, accessible and locally valued functions, thereby providing multiple benefits for both people and wildlife in the area.

14.18 The Coalfield has the widest variety of habitat as the Magnesian Limestone gives way to the acidic Tyne and Wear Lowlands. The countryside in the south and the east of the area does not have any specific policy protection, though studies by The Limestone Landscape Partnership recognises the quality of the landscape here and its importance for biodiversity. The Magnesian Limestone Escarpment is the city's most significant geodiversity and biodiversity asset and therefore should be protected from development that may result in its unnecessary erosion or disfigurement.

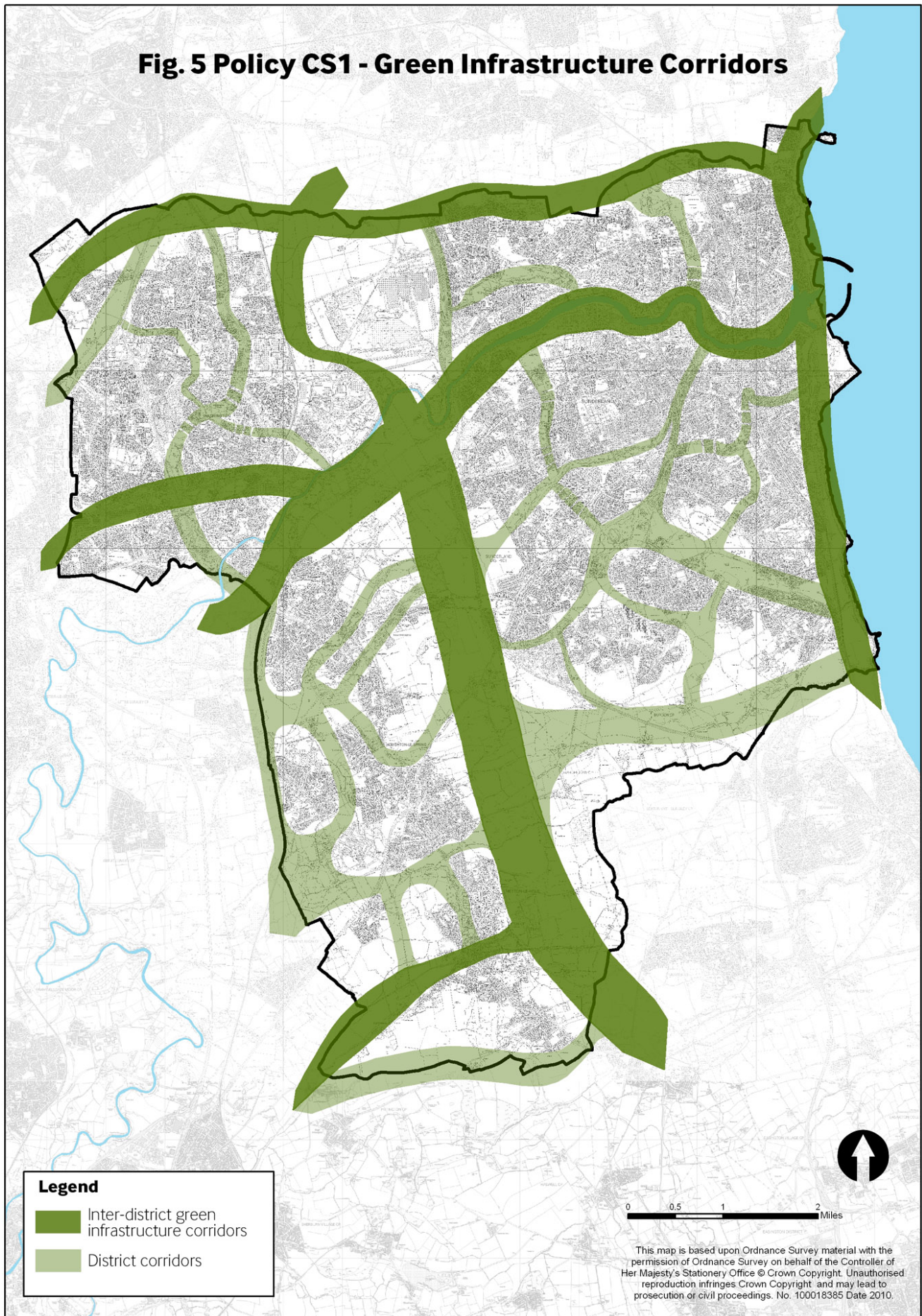
14.19 The Coalfield has a rich and varied historic environment and includes the ancient townships of Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole. The current urban form has largely been shaped by the development of the mining industry; as a result the area includes many settlements, each with their own identity. It is important the individual identity of each is retained and enhanced. New developments should be well integrated into existing settlements, ensuring settlements and villages do not just become commuter areas, thereby sustaining services and facilities.

14.20 Four Mineral Safeguarding Areas have been identified in the Coalfield. Extraction at Warden Law, Great Eppleton and Pittington Hill could have consequences for the city's Green Belt and open countryside. Both of the city's operational quarries, Hetton Moor House Farm and Eppleton Quarry, are located in the Coalfield.

14.21 The former Herrington Colliery has been reclaimed and developed into Herrington Country Park. It is home to various outdoor events and features one of the largest open-air

concert sites in the North East. It will be further developed as a premier regional outdoor events area with the capacity to stage large functions.

Fig. 5 Policy CS1 - Green Infrastructure Corridors



APPENDIX 4: ACCESS TO NATURAL GREENSPACE STANDARDS (ANGSt)

Extracts from “Nature Nearby” published by Natural England 2010.

A proxy measure when mapping naturalness

The definition of natural space within ANGSt is “*places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate*”. When using this definition, actually deciding at which point a feeling of naturalness predominates may be difficult to determine, and it can be argued that there is considerable room for interpretation. Therefore, in practice some form of proxy for a feeling of naturalness will be necessary, particularly where GIS is used for identifying accessible natural greenspace. Recent research by Aleksandra Kazmierczak of Salford University has used land use categorisation as a proxy measure for naturalness, creating a four stage rating. All land should be mapped to indicate its naturalness using the four levels below:

Level 1

- Nature conservation areas, including sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)
- Local sites (including local wildlife sites, regionally important geological sites – RIG)
- Local nature reserves (LNR)
- National nature reserves (NNR)
- Woodland
- Remnant countryside (within urban and urban fringe areas).

Level 2

- Formal and informal open space
- Unimproved farmland
- Rivers and canals
- Unimproved grassland
- Disused/derelict land, mosaics of formal and informal areas scrub etc
- Country Parks
- Open access land

Level 3

- Allotments
- Church yards and cemeteries
- Formal recreation space

Level 4

- Improved farmland

Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard

Access to the natural environment through local green spaces varies widely across the country, and even within a single local authority area. ANGSt aims to address this by setting a range of accessibility standards for natural sites and areas within easy reach of people’s homes. A broad view is adopted on what constitutes ‘[natural](#)’. Natural does not necessarily mean it has to be rare or notable enough to be designated. Users will find nature in wildlife, open landscapes, seasonal changes and places of tranquility.

ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;

- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population

ANGSt is based on three principles:

- a) Improving access.
- b) Improving naturalness.
- c) Improving connectivity.

a) Improving access

Improving access, and the distance thresholds used in the Standard, is based on what we know of people's behaviour. We know for example that the majority of parents are unwilling to allow their children to be unaccompanied more than 300m from home. Although local circumstances may lead to variations on this distance, adopting this as a standard would ensure that the majority of children do have a natural space near their home, which they are able to use freely. These distance requirements are set at a level that takes into account the need for local spaces, as well as larger strategic spaces. Because ANGSt takes a broad view of what constitutes natural greenspace, the requirements can be met through a wide range of different types of space, from local parks, greenways and footpaths, areas set aside for sustainable urban drainage systems, woodland and heathland. The 300 metre and 2 km standards are valuable standards to apply for new housing developments, growth areas, and in the master planning process. Natural England has piloted a number of projects that improve access to the natural environment and people's connection to it. Some site examples are provided in [Annex 6](#). Accessibility should not only be seen in terms of distance from people's houses and access into and within a site. People need to know where their local green spaces are, and should feel comfortable in using them. This requires active management and promotion by taking all reasonable means to deal with any physical and social barriers that there may be to their use. Managers need to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of his or her disability. It does not outline specific standards but requires that reasonable provision should be made. Public bodies should positively promote equality of access. This means that all those responsible for providing access to accessible greenspace and the wider countryside must justifiably consider provision for disabled people across a whole range of services including physical access, information, interpretation and signage. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment will help to ensure that green spaces are planned to accommodate all potential users whatever their age, ability or cultural background and will help to identify any barriers to access, both physical and psychological.

b) Improving naturalness (and biodiversity)

Many locally accessible spaces, through their nature, layout and the way that they are managed, may not offer a very wide range of biodiversity. There are ways in which habitat improvement can be achieved in green space areas that are not rich in biodiversity. Opening culverts, naturalising streams, creating meadow areas on slopes, wild flower planting, and differential mowing around the edges of open spaces are just some of the improvements that can be made to improve biodiversity. Involving local people and schools in improving the wildlife value of open spaces will be important in making these areas richer and encouraging local ownership. It will also help to meet the Biodiversity Duty for Local Authorities (NERC Act, Section 40) and achieve National

Indicator targets (NI197) for local sites. This is a duty placed on local authorities to establish systems, in partnership with others, incorporating biodiversity considerations into authority-wide services and functions. It requires that local authorities are able to demonstrate their achievements in this respect. Further guidance can be found in [How to encourage biodiversity in Urban Parks](#) published by CABE Space and in the Town and Country Planning Association document: [Biodiversity by Design – a guide for Sustainable Communities](#).

c) Improving connectivity

Providing a welcoming atmosphere to all visitors to accessible natural greenspace, from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, will provide opportunities for individuals and communities to engage and connect with their local environment. It can provide a focus for educational activity, community events and social activities. Engaging with the environment can be at a variety of levels. Opportunities will depend on how spaces are designed and managed and on a range of active interventions, for example:

- Encouraging users to develop an affinity with a familiar area and enjoy the changes that the seasons bring
- Through active interpretation
- Providing information and opportunities to give feedback through social networking
- Encouraging participation in events such as guided walks
- Giving people the opportunity to volunteer and become involved in management decisions, maintenance and activities

Engagement can lead to involvement and both can increase awareness and understanding of the natural environment. Green spaces should be managed, where possible, for multi-functionality both within a site and across a number of sites serving a neighbourhood. Green spaces may, for example, provide opportunities to play, exercise, relax and enjoy being outdoors, alongside grazing land, shelter belts and bio-fuel production. Getting the balance right between these elements demands spaces of the right size, design and management regimes.

Natural England's position on access is based on the belief that:

- There should be provision of the widest range of access opportunities for people of all abilities, ages, ethnic groups and social circumstances to actively engage in, value and enjoy the natural environment
- Access opportunities should aid healthy activity and be integral to people's daily lives particularly close to where they live
- Access should contribute to achieving the transition to a low carbon economy by encouraging sustainable leisure use. Integrating people with landscape and wildlife is an essential outcome for all our work

APPENDIX 5: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STEERING GROUP (AT DECEMBER 2010)

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTY PLAN CORE STRATEGY
MINERALS TECHNICAL PAPERS CONSULTATION – TECHNICAL REPORT
“NEW MINERALS AND WASTE SITES IN COUNTY DURHAM”.**

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report informs the committee of Durham County Council's consultation on a series of mineral technical reports which will support and provide evidence for the preparation of the County Council's Local Development Framework.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Between June and August 2010, Durham County Council undertook consultation into the first statutory stage of its Core Strategy, the “Issues and Options” Draft. The Core Strategy will provide the overarching planning strategy for County Durham to 2030 and will sit at the heart of its Local Development Framework (LDF). In response, this Council made comments on the issues raised which were reported to this Committee in September 2010.

- 2.2 Durham County Council is now undertaking consultation on a suite of Technical Reports to support the preparation of both its Core Strategy and its Allocations Development Plan Document (that will set out site specific allocations for a variety of land uses), including four mineral related technical reports :

- Towards a Minerals Delivery Strategy for County Durham
- Energy Minerals in County Durham
- New Minerals and Waste Sites in County Durham
- Safeguarding Mineral Resources for the Future

- 2.3 Of relevance to this report is the issue of surface mining and consideration within the emerging County Durham Core Strategy of allocating strategic sites. National policy requires Core Strategies in the main to be non-site specific (*ie* they should provide broad land use policies regarding the overall distribution of new development). However it is permissible to consider the allocation sites that are strategically significant and central to the delivery of Core Strategies. This issue of surface mining and strategic sites is discussed in the Technical Report “New Minerals and Waste sites in County Durham”. The closing date for comments was 11th February 2011. Sunderland City Council was belatedly notified of these consultations. A holding letter has therefore been submitted pending the views of this Committee.

Technical Report “New Minerals and Waste sites in County Durham”

- 2.4 The approach taken by Durham County Council in its Technical Report to surface mining reflects Government guidance in that they cannot quantify the scale of surface mined coal extraction that could occur over the life of

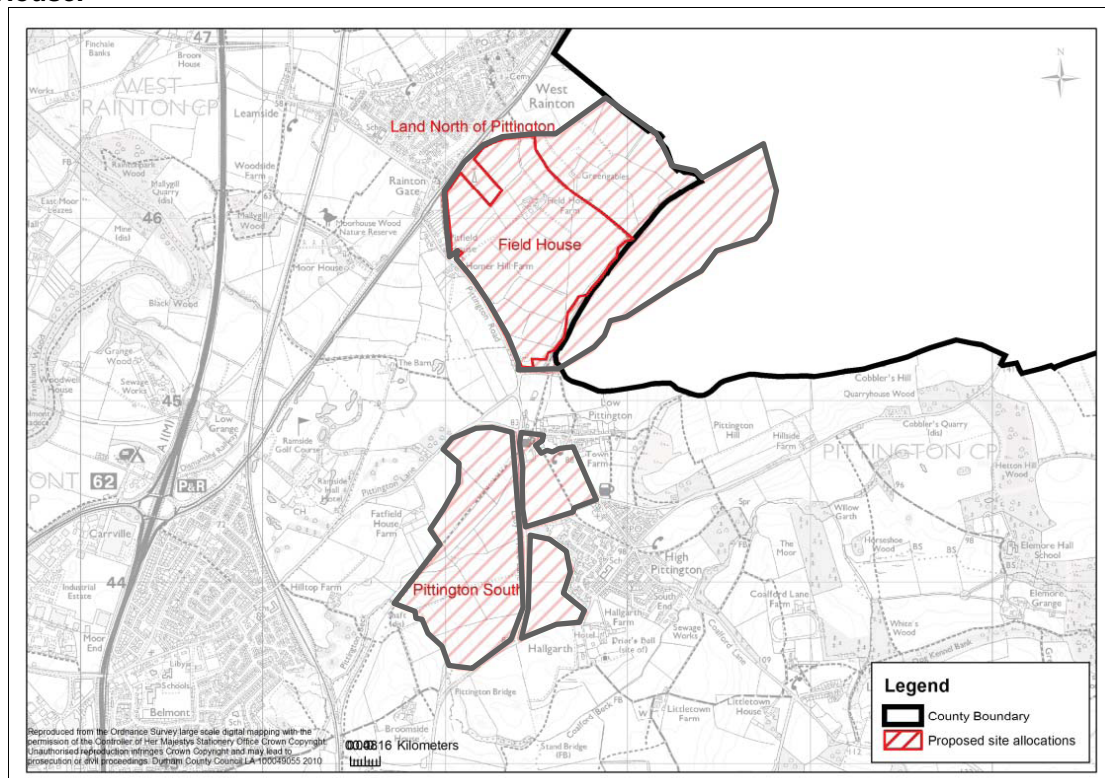
the County Durham Plan. The Government in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3 makes its clear that :

"It is not for the planning system to seek to set limits on or targets for any particular source or level of energy supply; nor to predetermine the appropriate levels of coal to be produced by underground or opencast mining. It is for individual operators to determine the level of output they wish to aim for in the light of market conditions, and for MPAs to determine the acceptability of individual projects in accordance with the principles of the land use planning system having regard to policies and all other material considerations".

2.5 Within this context of national policy, as part of the preparation for its LDF, Durham County Council previously requested representations for new minerals sites from minerals operators which could be considered through the LDF process. In December 2009, 8 new surface coal mine sites were submitted. The site summaries of each site are contained in the Technical Report "New Minerals and Waste sites in County Durham". Of relevance to Sunderland are three sites shown on Diagram 1. These are :

- Pittington South promoted by ATH Resources
- Pittington North which straddles the local authority administrative boundary with Sunderland promoted by ATH Resources
- Field House which forms a smaller element of the Pittington North site promoted by UK Coal.

Diagram 1 : Proposed Surface Mining sites at Pittington North and South, and Field House.



- 2.6 The Pitlington North proposed by ATH Resources is located to the north of Low Pitlington, with High Moorsley to the east and West Rainton to the North West, separated by the A690. It totals some 195 hectares in area of which 47 hectares lies within Sunderland. There are landscape, ecological and heritage interests in the area of the site including Moorsley Banks SSSI.
- 2.7 ATH Resources indicate that the Pitlington North site covers 1.6 km² has potential reserves of 2.5 million tonnes of coal and estimated 5.5 year working life. Pitlington South covers 0.9 km² and has potential reserves of 800,000 tonnes of coal and estimated 3.5 year working life. It is understood that the coal would likely supply existing power stations in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, as well as major employers in the North East of England. ATH Resources claim that this would reduce the U.K's dependence on imports and that the Pitlington North and South sites would provide employment opportunities directly and indirectly for up to 70 people.
- 2.8 Coal would be transported off site by road via the A689 to junction 60 of the A1(M), but there is potential for links into the national rail network. No indication has been given regarding the number of lorry movements.
- 2.9 ATH Resources are therefore contending that both sites should therefore be allocated as strategic site within the emerging County Durham Core Strategy, although as made clear elsewhere in this report, no approach has been made to this Council regarding that part of the Pitlington North site which falls within the boundary of Sunderland City Council.
- 2.10 Within part of the Pitlington North site, is a smaller proposed site known as Field House. This site lies solely within Durham, and is also subject to a proposal for surface mining by UK Coal and pre-application discussions have already commenced. The 0.72 km² site has potential reserves of 500,000 tonnes of coal and estimated 2.5 year working life.
- 2.11 Within the Technical Report, Durham County Council has commented upon the merits of allocating strategic minerals sites with its emerging Core Strategy.
- 2.12 In response to the proposal from ATH Resources, Durham County Council considers that the Core Strategy should only allocate new mineral sites where they are of strategic significance and central to the delivery of the Core Strategy. Whilst, the sites contain large quantities of coal they will be mined over a relatively short period in relation to the life of the Core Strategy. PPS 12 makes the point that Core Strategies should not include site specific detail which can date quickly. In these circumstances if the sites were to progress they should be considered through an Allocations Development Plan Document, or through the submission of a planning application. It is understood that further assessments are to be undertaken for each site to consider their appropriateness for inclusion within the future Allocations Development Plan Document. As part of the consultation into this Technical Report, Durham County Council has requested views as to its conclusions on the treatment of these sites.

3.0 Commentary

- 3.1 It should be noted that as part of the preparation of the Sunderland's LDF, no similar proposals have been received from ATH Resources or other operators for the surface mining of the Pitlington North Site.
- 3.2 The consultation from Durham County Council is directed at the allocation of strategic sites for minerals operations within its emerging Core Strategy. The conclusions reached by Durham County Council to resist the allocation of these sites within the Core Strategy are considered to be appropriate and it is recommended that its position should be supported.
- 3.3 Given that Durham County Council intends to undertake further assessments to allocate surface mining sites within its emerging Allocations Development Plan Document, the following sets out the initial observations regarding the principle of the Pitlington North site for surface mining :
- Given the Pitlington North site straddles the administrative boundaries of Sunderland and Durham, the progression of any allocation through the LDF system or a planning application would operationally need to be considered jointly between the two Council's. Separate planning applications would be required for consideration for any development that straddles the boundary between Sunderland and County Durham. Equally neither authority would be able to make LDF allocations with the other authority's boundary.
 - The part of the Pitlington North site which lies within the Sunderland administrative boundary is not identified as an area of mineral extraction within Sunderland's Unitary Development Plan (1998).
 - Should it come forward either as an allocated site in the Allocations Development Plan Document or via a planning application, it would need to be assessed on its merits and against the policy tests within Policy 44 of the Regional Spatial Strategy¹, saved policies M5, M7, and M8 of the Unitary Development Plan and Minerals Policy Guidance note 3. These tests require that there should normally be a presumption against open cast coal extraction unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations, or if the proposal can provide community or local benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts. Furthermore, Sunderland's emerging Core Strategy policy will seek to conserve and enhance the environment through a criteria led approach requiring proposals to consider a range of factors including the conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment, protection of the amenity to residents and businesses, and arrangements for environmental restoration and aftercare.

¹ The Regional Spatial Strategy forms as part of the statutory development plan for the city, though it is to be abolished under the Localism Bill. Until enactment of the Bill, expected towards the end of 2011, the scrapping of Regional Strategy can itself be a 'material consideration' which can be considered by local planning authorities and planning inspectors when making decisions.

- Also, influencing these considerations would be the acceptability of the principle of the development, the impact of the proposal on visual and residential amenity, highways, ecology, and heritage. The UDP does identify designations close to the proposed site including Great North Forest, wildlife corridors, multi user route, as well as close proximity to a site of nature conservation interest.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 For the reasons, set out in this Report, it is considered that the Sites at Pitlington North and South should not be considered as a Strategic sites with County Durham's emerging Core Strategy. However, any allocation in the Allocations Development Plan Document would require significant consultation and involvement with this Authority. Due to the environmental sensitivities of the sites, these would need careful examination of any proposal to surface mine coal.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 Committee is requested to:
- i) Endorse the officer comments as detailed within this report and make any comments considered appropriate;
 - ii) Authorise officers to forward a copy of this report to Durham County Council as the City Council's formal response to the Technical Report "New Minerals and Waste sites in County Durham".

6.0 Relevant consultations/ considerations

- a) **Financial Implications** – No direct costs associated with this consultation. However, costs will likely arise from progressing any allocation or planning application of the North Pitlington site, where Sunderland City Council may wish to be represented at any formal examination.
- b) **Legal Implications** – Durham County Council is consulting on technical papers which will inform the preparation of its LDF in accordance with regulations .
- c) **Policy Implications** - The proposal for the North Pitlington site as a strategic site will need to be assessed against national and local planning policy.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Regional Spatial Strategy July 2008
 MPG 3 Coal Mining and colliery spoil disposal March 1999
 Sunderland City Council UDP 1998
 Durham County Council (November 2010) Technical Papers:
 Towards a Minerals Delivery Strategy for County Durham.
 Energy Minerals in County Durham.
 New Minerals and Waste sites in County Durham.
 Safeguarding Mineral Resources for the future.

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