

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Housing Sites Background Paper

**Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
March 2018**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to explain the process which has led to the proposed designation of housing sites within the villages of Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent in the Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 As part of the consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan we are inviting comments on the proposed housing site allocations. The Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan is available on our website at www.lowconiscliffeandmerrybentneighbourhoodplan.org.uk.
- 1.3 Comments can be made in the following ways:
- By email to: lcmneighbourhoodplan@outlook.com
 - By letter to: The Parish Clerk, Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council, 9 Woodcrest Road, Darlington DL3 8EF
 - Attending the consultation event on Saturday 28 April 2018 between 11am and 1pm, at St Edwin's Church Hall, High Coniscliffe, Darlington, DL2 2LR.
- 1.4 The Parish Council must receive comments by **12noon on 2 June 2018**.

2. Background

The Development Plan

- 2.1 The current Development Plan for the Plan area comprises the: Darlington Core Strategy (2011) and the saved policies of the Darlington Local Plan (1997). Local Plan policy E2 defines settlement limits for both Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent villages and requires most new development to be located within settlements across the borough. Outside settlement boundaries, policy E2 restricts development to: agricultural or forestry operations; small scale development beneficial to the rural economy or the needs of rural communities; operational development; and countryside related sports or recreation activities. No housing allocations are included within the adopted Development Plan.

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.2 National planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) respectively. The NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.
- 2.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The application of the presumption will have implications for how communities engage in the Neighbourhood Planning process. Critically, it means that neighbourhoods should:
- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development;
 - Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan; and
 - Identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with their Neighbourhood Plan to proceed.
- 2.4 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF identifies that, to boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should:
- Use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy;
 - Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;
 - Identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
 - For market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target;
 - Set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.
- 2.5 Paragraph 50 of the NPPF identifies that when planning for housing, local planning authorities should:

- Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;
- Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and
- Where affordable housing is needed, set policies for the development of on-site affordable housing unless there is robust justification why there is a need for an off-site or alternative contribution.

2.6 The NPPG provides additional advice regarding how to assess the housing and economic development needs of an area. The primary objective of identifying need is to:

- *'identify the future quantity of housing needed, including a breakdown by type, tenure and size;*
- *identify the future quantity of land or floorspace required for economic development uses including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for new development; and*
- *provide a breakdown of that analysis in terms of quality and location, and to provide an indication of gaps in current land supply.'*

2.7 The NPPG also provides a helpful definition of need:

'Need for housing in the context of the guidance refers to the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that is likely to be needed in the housing market area over the plan period – and should cater for the housing demand of the area and identify the scale of housing supply necessary to meet that demand.

Need for all land uses should address both the total number of homes or quantity of economic development floorspace needed based on quantitative assessments, but also on an understanding of the qualitative requirements of each market segment.

Assessing development needs should be proportionate and does not require local councils to consider purely hypothetical future scenarios, only future scenarios that could be reasonably expected to occur.'

2.8 The NPPG identifies that it is appropriate for Parish Councils preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to use the guidance to inform their assessment of need, however a proportionate approach should be taken. The Neighbourhood Plan can refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the local planning authority as a starting point and should support the strategic direction set out in the Local Plan.

2.9 In addition, the NPPG provides guidance on how to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period in the housing and economic land availability assessment guidance. It is considered an appropriate methodology for both Local Planning Authorities and groups developing Neighbourhood Plans.

Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Housing Needs Assessment

2.10 As the Darlington Core Strategy covers the period to 2026, the policies on housing provision are largely out of date. Whilst the Darlington Local Plan is currently being prepared, it has not reached an advanced stage, therefore there is no up to date defined housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

2.11 A key role of the Neighbourhood Plan is to provide a policy framework that will support the provision of a level and mix of new homes that will seek to meet the needs of residents across the Plan area. In order to inform this, as part of the Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support

Package, AECOM prepared a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). The HNA estimated the quantity of housing needed across the Plan area by considering five different sources:

- **The adopted Local Plan requirement (2011 Core Strategy)** – identifies a housing requirement of 8,675 homes for Darlington as a whole over the plan period 2004 to 2026. The proportional share for the Plan area equates to 50 dwellings between 2017 to 2036;
- **The emerging Local Plan (Strategic Housing Market Assessment)** – identifies an objectively assessed need for Darlington of 11,160 homes between 2011 and 2036. The proportional share for the Plan area equates to 65 dwellings between 2017 to 2036;
- **National household projections (2014 based)** – identifies the total number of households for Darlington as 283 from 2011 to 2031, which would equate to 19 new dwellings between 2017 and 2036;
- **Past dwelling completion rates (2001 to 2011 and 2011+)** - between 2001 and 2011 there was an increase of 79 homes in the Plan area, an annual increase of 8 homes. Between 2011 and 31 March 2016, no new dwellings were completed. Taking an average over the period 2001 and 2017 provides a figure of 4 dwellings per annum, equating to 76 new dwellings between 2017 and 2036; and
- **Draft standard national methodology (2017)** – based on the proposed approach the annual requirement would equate to 1 new dwelling per annum, 19 new dwellings between 2017 and 2036.

2.12 The HNA therefore provided a range of scenarios to assist with the identification of a housing requirement for the Plan. The provision of the right type and mix of housing is critical to the continuation of most communities as viable settlements. In order to understand future needs, the HNA considers household tenure in the current stock as well as the population profile of the Plan area.

2.13 The Parish has a population of 716, with approximately 59% aged 16-64, 26% aged 0-15yrs and 16% aged 65 or over. Almost all of the housing stock, 283 dwellings, is either 'whole house' or 'bungalow', almost 80% are owned outright or with a mortgage and 20% rented, the largest majority from the private sector. With regard to household composition, the Plan area has a higher percentage of family households with dependent children (34%) than both Darlington (27%) and nationally (26%). In addition, a much lower percentage (20%) of one-person households than Darlington (32%) or nationally (30%).

2.14 The HNA identifies that the Plan area has an age structure that has undergone significant change in the period between the two censuses, with a strong orientation towards young families; those aged 44 and below are prominent. It also identifies that no households within the Plan area are on the housing waiting list.

3. Site Assessment Methodology

3.1 In order to fully understand the capacity of the Plan area to deliver housing to meet needs whilst protecting the important natural and built environment of the area, the Steering Group developed a housing site assessment methodology. This considered all of the sites included within the Darlington Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (2017) and identified other, potential additional sites.

3.2 The methodology comprised five stages:

- Stage 1 – availability of land for housing development;
- Stage 2 – individual site assessment
- Stage 3 – engagement;
- Stage 4 – review; and
- Stage 5 – submission/ adoption.

Stage 1 – Availability of land for housing development

3.3 The following information identified from the Darlington Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA):

- Current HELAA map of the Plan area;
- Table showing sites which have been identified as being:
 - deliverable within five years;
 - developable within 6-10;
 - developable within 11-15 years;
 - sites with constraints to development (uncertain sites); and
 - those which have been identified as being not currently developable, or discounted in the HELAA.

3.4 Where sites that are not included within the HELAA have been identified, contact must be made with the landowner to receive confirmation that the site is available for development.

Stage 2 – Individual site assessment

3.5 Each site to be assessment against the following five components (using standards assessment proforma):

- Accessibility;
- Local impact and integration;
- Landscape capacity;
- Specific constraints, physical characteristics and designations;
- Planning and infrastructure issues; and
- Overall assessment – suitability.

Accessibility:

3.6 The accessibility assessment will analyse issues in connection with access to services (physical distance), public transport and employment and site orientation. If a site is deemed poor in terms of access to services, it will likely to be assessed as unacceptable in terms of accessibility.

Access to the following services will be assessed:

- Distance to a primary school;
- Distance to a secondary school;
- Distance to a GP;
- Distance to a post office, and

- Distance to a retail centre.

Local impact and integration:

- 3.7 The local impact and integration assessment will analyse issues such as biodiversity, historical context, archaeology, recreational facilities, impact on adjoining land uses and the connectivity of the site to Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent as a whole. If a site has a Scheduled Ancient Monument, listed building or poor connectivity with the settlement, then the site will probably be assessed as unacceptable or doubtful in terms of local impact and integration. Similarly, if the development of the site is likely to impact adversely on biodiversity, with limited potential for mitigation, it will likely to be assessed as unacceptable.

Landscape capacity:

- 3.8 The landscape capacity assessment will analyse issues concerning both national and local landscape designations, and features within the site.

Specific constraints, physical characteristics and designations:

- 3.9 Such as contamination, way leaves, prime agricultural land, woodland, landscape value, biodiversity, flooding, previously developed land, other designations.

Planning and infrastructure issues:

- 3.10 The planning and infrastructure issues assessment will analyse issues relating to likely planning requirements; e.g. constraints regarding road access, water and sewerage, footpaths, education and contamination. If a site is deemed to have poor access, then the site will probably be assessed as unacceptable or doubtful in terms of planning and infrastructure.

Overall assessment – suitability:

- 3.11 The overall assessment draws all of the information together, establishing a final assessment based on the identified constraints. If there are potential mitigations or solutions which address the constraints, the site will be assessed as acceptable or unacceptable.

Stage 3 – Engagement:

- 3.12 Contact made with land owners prior to wider public engagement and public feedback on the draft boundary as part of the consultation on the Pre-Submission Draft Plan.

Stage 4 – Review:

- 3.13 Review of comments received and amendment where necessary.

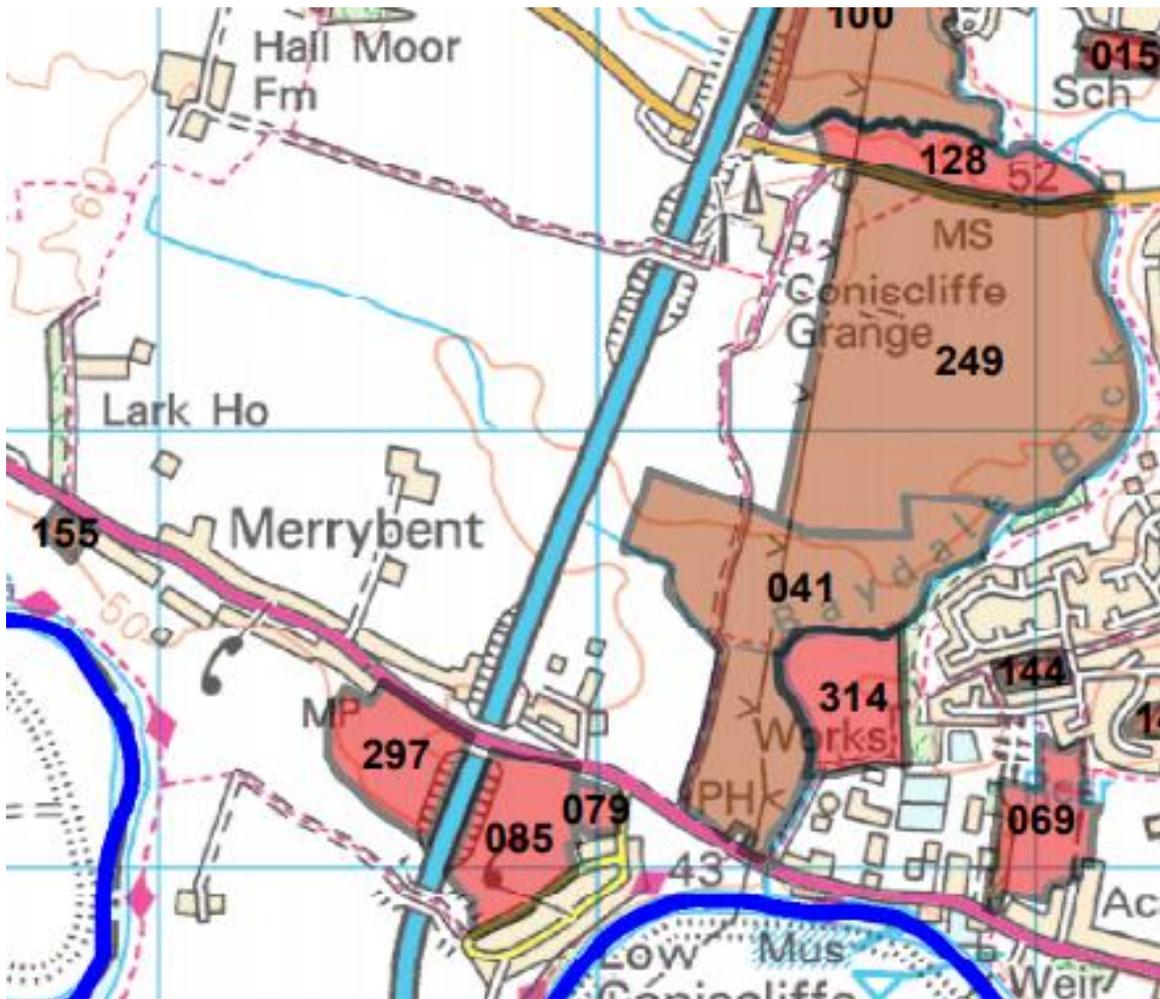
Stage 5 – Submission/ adoption:

- 3.14 Inclusion of proposed land allocations within Submission Draft Plan, if endorsed through examination and referendum it will be adopted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Site Assessment Outcomes

4.1 There are seven sites contained within the Darlington HELAA that lie within the Neighbourhood Plan Area:

- 041 – Coniscliffe Park (south)
- 079 - West of Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe;
- 085 – South of Coniscliffe Road, Low Coniscliffe;
- 128 – Farmland, Staindrop Road
- 155 – 80 Merrybent;
- 249 – Land off Staindrop Road
- 297 – Merrybent Full site.



4.2 For completeness, the full site assessment forms are included below.

HELAA Site Ref & Name	041 - Coniscliffe Park (South)
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Secondary School • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>High Coniscliffe at a distance of 2.5 miles</p> <p>Hummersknott Academy at a distance of 1.5 miles</p> <p>Darlington at a distance of 2.4 miles</p> <p>Mowden Post Office at a distance of 2.1 miles</p> <p>Carmel Surgery at a distance of 2.4 miles</p> <p>A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of highly valued agricultural landscape with significant public usage containing public rights of way, important hedgerows and Baydale Beck containing significant wildlife and mature trees</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>The landscape has a high agricultural value and provides for public amenity</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Zone 2 & 3 impact land prone to flooding</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Wildlife corridors and protected species incl. newts</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Outside current development limits. Noise from A1M motorway. Concern over the capacity of the road network eg Coniscliffe Road, Carmel Road and Staindrop Road which are incapable of being modified to cope with the significant increases in traffic and resulting in congestion, pollution and resultant risk to public health. Requirements for new school/s as existing primary and secondary schools would not be able to provide any places. Requirement for new highway access. EIA required.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The landscape has a high agricultural value and provides for public amenity and the loss of high value rural and amenity landscape would be highly detrimental to the people of Darlington.</p> <p>The impact on existing road network would be highly detrimental.</p> <p>The National grid pylons split the site.</p> <p>Local schools and basic services would not be capable of providing places for such a major development.</p> <p>This development in this location is not sustainable.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	079 - West of Gate Lane North of Low Coniscliffe
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 2.5 miles Hummersknott Academy at a distance of 1.4 miles Carmel College at a distance of 1.7 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.4 miles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.5 miles Carmel Surgery at distance of 2.4 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
Local impact & integration	Loss of highly valued rural landscape, important hedging and mature land trees forming a distinctive entrance to Low Coniscliffe.
Landscape capacity	Loss of highly valued rural landscape, important hedging and mature land trees forming a distinctive entrance to Low Coniscliffe.
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>No Yes, Zones 2 & 3 plus impact upon adjacent properties and land Yes Yes No No YES Open space to adjacent urban development protecting rural village of Low Coniscliffe</p>
Planning and infrastructure	Outside development limits. Gate Lane highway is not to required standards. Local primary schools and basic services would not be capable of providing places for the residents of this development.
Overall assessment	<p>The village of Low Coniscliffe does not provide any amenities for its residents. Gate Lane is unable to cope with any additional traffic. The development would destroy the rural landscape and entrance to Low Coniscliffe which characteristic of this historic village and is highly valued by the community. The location is not sustainable.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	085 - South of Coniscliffe Road, Low Coniscliffe
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>High Coniscliffe at a distance of 1.9 miles Hummersknott at a distance of 1.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.4 miles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.2 miles Carmel College at a distance of 1.7 miles Carmel surgery at a distance of 2.1 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of agricultural land and important hedging and mature trees which create a traditional rural landscape protecting the village of Low Coniscliffe</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Negative impact on the historical character and valued landscape surrounding Low Coniscliffe.</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>Nil No Zone 2 & 3 impact adjacent dwellings and land prone to flooding Yes Yes Yes No YES Open space adjacent to urban development protecting the rural village of Low Coniscliffe</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Outside development limits, Gate Lane highway is not to required standards, highway safety concerns due to proximity of A67. Lack of basic services render the location not sustainable. Noise from A67 and especially A1M motorway will be a health issue in this location. Requirements for new school/s as existing primary and secondary schools would not be able to provide any places.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The village of Low Coniscliffe does not provide any amenities for its residents, a lack of school places and the detrimental impact of increased traffic on the local road network means this location is not sustainable. Low Coniscliffe which is situated just off the A67 Darlington to Barnard Castle highway follows a linear pattern of development around a looped road. A development in this location would be detrimental to the historical character and valued landscape surrounding Low Coniscliffe.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	128 – Farmland, Staindrop Road
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>Mowden at distance of 1.5 miles Wyvern Academy at a distance of 1.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.1 miles Cockerton Post Office at a distance of 1.1 miles Carmel Surgery at a distance of 1.0 miles On Staindrop Road an hourly bus service operates 7 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of rural and agricultural landscape including important hedging and mature trees</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Loss of rural and agricultural landscape including important hedging and mature trees</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>No No Zone 2 may impact adjacent properties and land. No yes No No Yes</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Outside current development limits, Noise and pollution impact from A1M motorway. Requirements for new school/s as existing primary and secondary schools would not be able to provide any places.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>Cockerton provides for all basic amenities with surgeries, library, shops, restaurants and pubs all within 1 mile walking distance. Private transport is considered preferable but not essential. This location is not sustainable due to the flooding risks, lack of school places, lack of public transport and the detrimental impact of increased traffic on the local road network.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	155 - Field South West of Merrybent
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Secondary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 0.5 miles Hummersknott at a distance of 1.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 3.2 mles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.8 miles Carmel Road surgery is 2.9 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of agricultural land</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Loss of rural and agricultural landscape</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>No No Zone 1 No Yes No No No</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Outside current development limits. Noise concerns due to proximity of A67.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>Merrybent is situated on the A67 Darlington to Barnard Castle highway and follows a linear pattern of development to the north and south sides of the A67. This site is deemed unsuitable as it is in a high flood risk area and the land is significantly lower than the road. Any access to the site would be dangerous from this part of the busy A67 and the site would suffer noise pollution from the traffic.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	249 - Fields to South of Staindrop Road
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>Mowden at distance of 1.2 miles Wyvern Academy at a distance of 1.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.4 miles Cockerton Post Office at a distance of 1.1 miles Carmel Surgery at a distance of 1.5 miles No bus service to this site</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of public highly valued agricultural landscape with significant public usage containing public rights of way, bridleways, 'important' hedgerows, mature trees and the Baydale Beck containing significant and protected wildlife.</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Loss of rural and agricultural landscape</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>Nil No Zone 2 & 3 impact land prone to flooding Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Wildlife corridors and protected species including newts</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Limited Services available, outside the current development limits, impact of noise from A1M motorway. Potential contamination of Baydale Beck and River Tees. New highway access onto Staindrop Road would be required. EIA required.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The landscape has a high agricultural value and provides for public amenity and the loss of highly valued rural landscape would be extremely detrimental and significant.</p> <p>Local schools and basic services would not be able to provide for such a major development.</p> <p>The biggest concern is the existing road infrastructure in particular Carmel Road, Coniscliffe Road, Woodland Road and Staindrop Road being incapable of being modified to cope with the highly significant increase in traffic and resultant congestion, increased pollution therefore posing a risk to public health and safety.</p> <p>This development in this location is not sustainable.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	249 – Land off Staindrop Road
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>Mowden at distance of 1.2 miles Wyvern Academy at a distance of 1.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.4 miles Cockerton Post Office at a distance of 1.1 miles Carmel Surgery at a distance of 1.5 miles No bus service to this site</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of public highly valued agricultural landscape with significant public usage containing public rights of way, bridleways, ‘important’ hedgerows, mature trees and the Baydale Beck containing significant and protected wildlife.</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Loss of public highly valued agricultural landscape</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>Nil No Zone 2 & 3 impact land prone to flooding Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Wildlife corridors and protected species including newts</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Limited Services available, outside the current development limits, impact of noise from A1M motorway. Potential contamination of Baydale Beck and River Tees. New highway access onto Staindrop Road would be required. EIA required.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The landscape has a high agricultural value and provides for public amenity and the loss of highly valued rural landscape would be extremely detrimental and significant. Local schools and basic services would not be able to provide for such a major development. Impact on existing road infrastructure in particular Carmel Road, Coniscliffe Road, Woodland Road and Staindrop Road being incapable of being modified to cope with the highly significant increase in traffic and resultant congestion, increased pollution therefore posing a risk to public health and safety. This development in this location is not sustainable.</p>

HELAA Site Ref & Name	297 – Merrybent Full Site
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP • Public Transport 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 1.1 miles Carmel College at a distance of 1.7 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.6 mles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.4 miles Carmel Road surgery is 2.5 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of agricultural land to East and South of Merrybent</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Impact of the development on the linear character of Merrybent</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>No No Zone 2 & 3 impact adjacent properties and land prone to flooding No Yes No No No No</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Outside current development limits. Noise, pollution and health concerns due to proximity of A67 and A1M.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The village of Merrybent does not provide any amenities for its residents and a means of transport is considered essential. A lack of school places and the detrimental impact of increased traffic on local road network mean this scale of development in this location is not sustainable. Merrybent is situated on the A67 Darlington to Barnard Castle highway and follows a linear pattern of development to the north and south sides of the A67. A continuation of this linear pattern of development would be consistent with Merrybent’s built environment therefore a smaller linear pattern of development should be considered.</p>

4.3 In addition to the HELAA sites, assessments were undertaken for a further three sites within the Plan Area. The Former Nursery site has not been assessed as it has planning permission for 3 dwellings, which has been implemented and will therefore form part of the housing supply.

Site Ref & Name	North West Merrybent
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 0.5 miles Darlington at a distance of 3.2 miles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.6 miles Carmel College at a distance of 3.4 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of agricultural land.</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Site could accommodate approximately 10 dwellings, following a linear layout in keeping with the existing layout of Merrybent</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Way leaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>A site with minimal constraints. Agricultural land currently laid to pasture for grazing of animals.</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Full planning permission is required. Water, electricity, Gas and telephone services are readily accessible.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The village of Merrybent does not provide any amenities for its residents and a means of transport is considered essential. Merrybent is situated on the A67 Darlington to Barnard Castle highway midway between High Coniscliffe and Low Coniscliffe. Merrybent follows a linear pattern of development on the Northern and Southern sides of the A67. A development of 12 properties in a linear layout fronting the North side of the A67 would be consistent with the existing settlement and boundary on the Southern side of the A67.</p>

Site Ref & Name	South East End of Merrybent
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 0.8 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.8 miles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.3 miles Carmel College at a distance of 3.0 miles A half hourly bus service operates 6 days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday.</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Loss of agricultural land.</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Site could accommodate approximately 8 dwellings, following a linear layout in keeping with the existing layout of Merrybent.</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>A site with minimal constraints. Agricultural land currently cultivated for rape seed or similar. Subject to noise from the A1(M) necessitating noise assessment and reduction measures within the proposed design.</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Full planning permission is required. Water, electricity, Gas and telephone services are readily accessible.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The village of Merrybent does not provide any amenities for its residents and a means of transport is considered essential. Merrybent is situated on the A67 Darlington to Barnard Castle highway midway between High Coniscliffe and Low Coniscliffe. Merrybent follows a linear pattern of development on the Northern and Southern sides of the A67. A development of 10 properties in a linear layout fronting the South side of the A67 would be consistent with the existing settlement and boundary on the Northern side of the A67.</p>

Site Ref & Name	Plot in Central Low Coniscliffe
<p>Access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearest primary school • Town centre • Post office • GP 	<p>High Coniscliffe at distance of 1.9 miles Darlington at a distance of 2.5 miles Mowden Post Office at a distance of 1.6 miles Carmel College at a distance of 2.2 miles A half hourly bus service operates within 0.2m distance days per week 7:00am till 10:00pm and is hourly on a Sunday</p>
<p>Local impact & integration</p>	<p>Undeveloped site of a former detached bungalow which was demolished to make for a new dwelling. The rubble remains and weeds make up the site presently</p>
<p>Landscape capacity</p>	<p>Site could accommodate approximately 3 dwellings, following a linear layout in keeping with the existing layout of Low Coniscliffe.</p>
<p>Specific constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDL • Contamination • Flooding • Wayleaves • Agricultural land • Woodland • Historic assets • Biodiversity value • Other designations 	<p>A brownfield site with minimal constraints. Subject to noise from the A1(M) necessitating noise assessment and reduction measures within the proposed design. The proposed design would need to be sympathetic to the historic character and architecture of the surrounding properties.</p>
<p>Planning and infrastructure</p>	<p>Full planning permission has elapsed for this site and is required again. Water, electricity and telephone services are readily accessible.</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The village of Low Coniscliffe does not provide any amenities for its residents and a means of transport is considered essential. Low Coniscliffe is a picturesque cul-de-sac village of 95 properties situated just off the A67 on the outskirts of Darlington. A development of 1 or 2 dwellings in a linear layout fronting the North side of Gate Lane would be consistent with the existing settlement layout.</p>

5. Identification of housing sites

5.1 The site assessment process has identified the potential for four small housing sites to be allocated within the Plan:

- North West Merrybent for 10 dwellings;
- South East Merrybent for 8 dwellings;
- Former nursery site for 3 dwellings; and
- Central Low Coniscliffe for 3 dwellings.

5.2 The size and location of these sites reflect the character and scale of the Plan Area. The allocation of the sites will ensure that the Plan supports the sustainable growth of Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent, delivering around 24 new homes and allowing an 8% increase in the number of properties within the Plan area.



Figure 1: Housing sites Merrybent



Figure 2: Housing site Low Coniscliffe