

County Durham Plan

Aykley Heads

**Draft
Supplementary Planning
Document
July 2012**

Altogether better



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1 Introduction

1.1 This draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared in the context of the ongoing preparation of the County Durham Plan and relates to the proposed allocation of land at Aykley Heads, Durham. Policy 6 of the County Durham Plan Preferred Options sets the framework for this SPD.

1.2 The development of a strategic employment site at Aykley Heads represents a central component of the emerging County Durham Local Plan's vision for Durham City. The creation of a flagship employment site in Durham City will be fundamental to realising the City's economic growth potential and achieving the Local Plan's wider economic ambitions for the County over the next 15 years and beyond.

1.3 This draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced to guide strategic development at Aykley Heads and assist in realising the economic potential of Durham City and the wider County.

1.4 Preparation of the County Durham Plan began in 2009, starting with the collection of a comprehensive evidence base across the many communities of County Durham. This draft SPD will be published for consultation alongside the Preferred Options Plan. Once the consultation period is complete, the comments received will be assessed and, where appropriate changes will be made to the SPD. The SPD will be adopted at the same time as the County Durham Plan in 2014.

The County Durham Plan

1.5 The Council is currently preparing the County Durham Local Plan, adoption of which is anticipated in Summer 2014. The County Durham Plan will set out a spatial vision and objectives for County Durham to 2030 and contain policies that guide development and change in the County for the next twenty years.

1.6 The preferred Spatial Vision and Objectives and Spatial Strategy recognise the role of Durham City as a distinct driving force of economic growth for the County and the need to realise its potential. The City is to be a strong focus for new employment opportunities, accompanied by complementary new housing and retail development. New infrastructure required to support this growth is to be directly linked to the delivery of new development.

1.7 To reflect and facilitate the realisation of the preferred Spatial Strategy, a significant proportion of new employment and housing development is to be accommodated within and around Durham City.

1.8 As part of the Local plan's preparation we undertook a series of consultations including:

- The Core Strategy Issues and Options (June to August 2010) recognised Aykley Heads as having the potential to provide a strategic employment opportunity alongside a mix of uses including housing in the heart of Durham City;
- The Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment Part 2 (December 2010 to 11 February 2011) identified a number of potential Green Belt sites around Durham City for housing to deliver growth in Durham City and support job creation at Aykley Heads.

- The Policy Directions Paper (May to July 2011) consulted on potential strategic employment allocations, including Aykley Heads, and confirmed our view that development of this site would create a central business district in the City which would be attractive to the market both nationally and internationally.
- The County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (October 2011) confirmed our view that Aykley Heads represents the best site in the city for new office development and set out some early design principles including significant improvements to open space and the creation of a new City Park for the community.

1.9 It is our intention that Aykley Heads is allocated as a strategic employment site in the County Durham Plan. A draft allocation for the site is included in the emerging Local Plan Preferred Options.

1.10 This draft SPD is being consulted on in parallel with the Local Plan Preferred Options. When finalised, the SPD will sit alongside the County Durham Plan to provide detailed guidance on development proposals submitted pursuant to the site's allocation.

Purpose and Objectives of the SPD

Purpose and Objectives

1.11 The draft SPD is intended to ensure that new employment development at the site is brought forward in a planned, comprehensive and timely way.

1.12 The purpose of the draft SPD is to provide a planning, design and implementation framework to guide major development proposals. The objectives of this SPD are to:

1. Provide a comprehensive Masterplan which will ensure that the site is able to offer a number of market ready sites for new employment development alongside a mix of uses including housing;
2. Identify requirements for and provide a broad strategy to deliver supporting infrastructure;
3. Set out best practice and appropriate standards in respect of design and sustainability to promote quality in design over the lifetime of the site's development;
4. Set out a framework for delivery including planning application requirements and longer-term management arrangement.

Consultation and Status

1.13 The production of this draft SPD has involved discussions with a number of stakeholders including landowners, developers, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees. It is being made subject to public consultation so that the final version may respond to the views of the local community.

1.14 The finalised SPD will form part of the County Durham Local Development Framework and should read alongside the policies and proposals of the County Durham Local Plan and other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) as well as national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

1.15 It will not be part of the statutory Development Plan however it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications that are brought forward for the site alongside other material considerations.

Structure

1.16 The Structure of the SPD is as follows:

- Section 2: Site and Context
- Section 3: Vision and Objectives
- Section 4: Masterplan Principles and Parameters
- Section 5: Delivery

Question on Aykley Heads Supplementary Planning Document

Question 1

This is our preferred approach to the development of land at Aykley Heads.

Do you agree or disagree with our approach?

How to Comment

1.17 We have posed one question for you to answer. You can make your comments known to us in a number of ways, but we would encourage you to submit your views online, via the County Durham Plan consultation pages: <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>

1.18 To use our interactive website, and to make your views known to us, if not already registered, you will need to register your details and then log in using the user name you register with and the password which will be sent to you by email. This method should save you time and it will allow us to process and consider your comments more quickly. We hope that you will find the website quick and easy to use and will use it as your preferred way to access and comment on documents in the future. Once your comments have been submitted they will be checked and added to the interactive website where you will also be able to see what comments have been made by others. To protect your privacy, all other information you provide when registering with us will not be open to public view.

1.19 You can also send us your comments by e-mail to: CDPconsultation@durham.gov.uk

1.20 Alternatively you can send us your comments to our special freepost address (all you need to do is write this one line on an envelope - no other address details are needed): **FREEPOST Spatial Policy**

1.21 As well as being available on our website this document is also available to view at all local libraries and Customer Access Points across County Durham. For enquiries and to request copies of the document, including in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, audio cassette or

an alternative language, please call: **0300 123 7070**. You can also download an electronic copy of this report and learn more about the County Durham Plan from our main website: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

1.22 All comments and completed response forms should be received by: **Friday 2nd November 2012**.

2 Site and Context

Location and history

2.1 Aykley Heads covers an area of 6.8 ha and is a successful business and employment location and is an important component of the employment offer of Durham City and County Durham.



Figure 1

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2.2 The County Council and business community recognise that the Aykley Heads site is one of the best locations for office development in the County. Key assets of the site are:

- Fast access to Newcastle International and Durham Tees Valley Airports;
- Excellent road network, proximity to A1(M), A690 and A167;
- Excellent public transport links including an East Coast mainline station within walking distance;
- Proposals for the Northern Relief Road to provide more convenient access to the A1(M);
- City centre facilities within walking distance;
- Proximity to one of the Country's best universities;
- Mature parkland setting and location within an historic city.

2.3 The Aykley Heads site is a unique asset and the County Council wishes to realise its potential in order to attract new business and inward investment to provide additional employment within Durham City for the benefit of the County.

Existing Uses

2.4 The site currently incorporates major office premises and uses including:

- Sunderland Mutual Marine Insurance global headquarters;
- Aykley Heads Business Centre including the Vardy Group, Premier Waste Management Limited, and Swinburne Maddison
- The Rivergreen Centre occupied by a number of users including, Cathedral Lettings, Building Design Northern Ltd, Lambert Property Solutions, H&H Land and Property, and North East Chamber of Commerce;
- Aykley Heads House including Bistro 21 and commercial office space;
- The Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Museum;
- County Hall (home to Durham County Council);
- Durham Constabulary Police Headquarters;
- Durham City Registry Office;
- Durham Trinity School and Sports College; and
- Recreation ground.

Current Proposals

Durham Constabulary Police Headquarters

2.5 Durham Constabulary intends to consolidate and relocate the Police Headquarters to a new building on land to the south of the existing facility and redevelop the existing site for residential development. Planning permission has recently been granted for the new HQ and the proposed housing (230 dwellings).

Durham County Council Relocation

2.6 County Hall is an imposing 6 storey building which occupies the western frontage and is clearly visible from the B1635. Built in the early 1960's it is now an ageing building which no longer meets the workspace needs of the County Council. It also incurs expensive running costs (c. £2m per annum) together with ongoing high maintenance liabilities. It is the Council's stated intention, therefore, to relocate services to a new fit-for-purpose building, thereby providing increased efficiency and cost savings. Relocation will enable the existing premises at County Hall to be demolished and the site redeveloped to provide modern, flexible office space that can meet the needs of modern occupiers.

Access



Figure 2 Local Context Plan

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Local Highways

2.7 The site is located immediately to the north-east of the A691, north of Durham city centre. This main road provides access south to the city centre and north to Consett via local villages. The A691 also adjoins the A690 and A167 nearby, providing direct access eastwards to Sunderland,

nothwards to the A1 via Chester-le-Street, and southwards to Newton Aycliffe respectively. To the north-west edge of the site the A691 branches onto the B6532 from Durham to Sacriston. Unclassified highways such as Finchdale Road and Front Street, provide access through Framwellgate Moor to the north of the site before linking with the A167.

Public Transport

2.8 The site is located adjacent to the East Coast Mainline, the main rail link between London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. This service is accessible to residents and commuters via Durham Railway Station immediately to the south of the site, linking Aycliffe Heads to the rest of the North East and beyond.

2.9 In addition to close proximity to Durham bus station, approximately 30 regular bus services operate along the A691 forming the south-western boundary of the site which link the sites to places within and outside the County including Newcastle, Darlington, and Sunderland. Bus stops are located within the site at the Durham Light Infantry Museum, and outside County Hall. There are several other bus stops within 400m of the site's north and west boundaries.

Walking and Cycling

2.10 The A691 and B6532 both have footpaths along the western boundary of the site which connect to Durham city centre (including the bus and railway stations), Framwellgate, and Pity Me. The site is crossed from Framwellgate Moor in the north-east to the County Council Offices in the west by a cycle path which continues onwards south to the Railway Station. The north-east boundary of the site forms part of a traffic-free Sustrans cycle route.

2.11 There are no formal designated rights of way across or within the site although it is recognised that informal public access does take place on the site and linking Wharton Park in the south-east.

Site Characteristics

Landscape Character

2.12 The County Durham Landscape Character Assessment (2008) identifies the site as being within the 'Urban' and 'Northern Wear Valley' Broad Character Areas within the wider Wear Lowlands Character Area which covers Durham City and the northern part of the County.

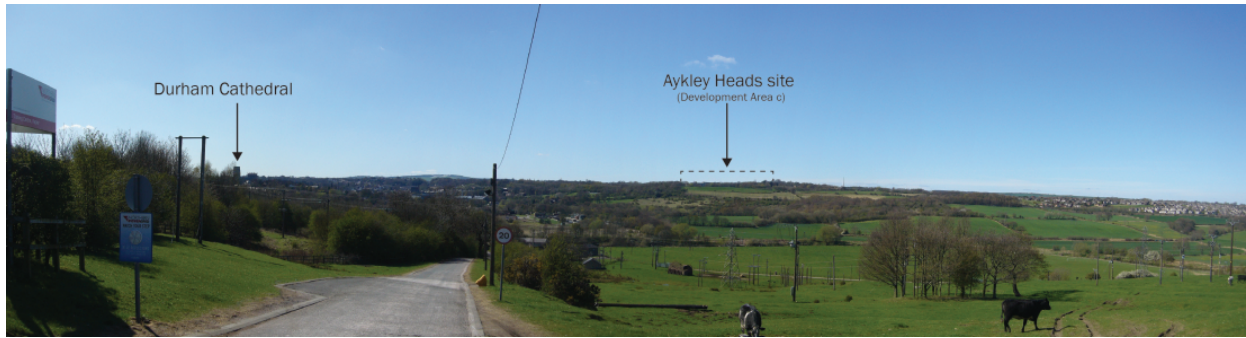
2.13 The site's local landscape character type is predominantly park and recreation ground with some lowland woods and denes (Fig 2.4). The site sits within a wider urban landscape setting which incorporates the developed areas in the north and west of the site.

Topography

2.14 The site is situated on the northern side of the River Wear Valley and as such has moderate, at times steep, slopes down to the river in the south. Much of the original topography, however, has been changed with the creation of various tiered plateaus, in particular, to the north and east of County Hall.

Key Views

2.15 The site is visible on the ridge line in distance views from the A690 on the approach to Durham City from the A1 (see Key View photograph). Its relationship with Durham Cathedral will be an important consideration in the siting and design of future developments.



Key View

Ecology

2.16 An Ecological Assessment has been undertaken which concluded that it will be possible to develop the site with only limited ecological impact.

2.17 The assessment indicated habitats present at the site are generally of small size with limited diversity and naturalness but provide a good amenity resource. The area of woodland approaching County Hall is of more ecological importance. The habitats overall are, however, considered to be of parish significance and ecological impacts are, therefore, considered to be low.

2.18 A bat survey showed the presence of pipistrelle bats in particular and a further, more detailed survey was recommended. Roe deer were also shown to be present. However, as their numbers are increasing it was considered that there was little threat to their conservation.

2.19 Some ponds throughout the site provide ecological interest, however no Great Crested Newts have been identified.

Heritage/Archaeology

2.20 There are three listed buildings within the site:

- Gate piers and walls north-west of Durham County Council Offices (Grade II) which will be retained
- Aykley Heads House (Grade II*) which will be retained
- County Police Communications Tower (Grade II), which will be relocated as part of the redevelopment of the Police Headquarters.

2.21 An Archaeological Assessment has been undertaken for the site which noted that much of the site has undergone reshaping over the years resulting in the present landform and it is likely that where soil has been removed these areas will have been archaeologically sterilised. Where the removed soil has been placed in other areas then any archaeological remains present will have been preserved and may be impacted by large scale earth moving operations and other construction works, such as piling.

2.22 The report concluded that there is evidence of past human activity within the area and recommended that trial pits and geophysical surveys are undertaken. It is also recommended that suitable mitigation strategies are prepared in respect of the potential indirect impact on listed buildings at the site and the World Heritage Site.

Ground Conditions

2.23 The site does not lie within any Groundwater Source Protection Zone as defined by the Environment Agency. Historical maps of the area indicate that for much of the time the majority of the site had remained in agricultural use until the development of the County Hall site in the 1960s and subsequent development further north.

2.24 We have prepared an Environmental Appraisal Report which has considered the local geology, hydrology and hydrogeology and contamination. This identified the former presence of industries associated with the extraction and/or processing of mineral deposits towards the southern part of the site. Further investigation will be needed to examine the potential for ground pollution from associated contaminants, including potential landfill materials before any development could take place here.

Flood Risk/Drainage



Figure 3 Flood Risk in the site vicinity

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2.25 The site is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 category area which means there is little or no risk of the site flooding from sea or rivers. An unnamed stream flows through the northern part of the site and along the eastern boundary. A pond is also present close to the railway that forms the eastern boundary of the site. A further unnamed stream flows south from an ornamental pond to the rear of County Hall. This stream enters a further ornamental pond located to the west of the DLI Museum. Investigations indicate that there may be limited localised surface water flooding in relation to these watercourses.

Utilities/Infrastructure

2.26 The site is already supplied by services and utilities including water, electricity and gas which serve the existing development areas. The Council has prepared a utilities plan for the site identifying the locations of existing utilities including high and low voltage underground electricity cables, water mains and plant. Given the presence of these utilities, connections to services is not considered to represent a constraint to development.

Masterplan Influences

2.27 In response to the site and its context the 'Constraints and Opportunities Plan' overleaf draws together the key site constraints and design opportunities that will inform the detailed Masterplan for the site. It is within this framework that the Concept Masterplan for the site has been prepared (see Section 4.0).



Figure 4

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3 Vision and Objectives

The Vision for Aykley Heads

"A new City Park at Aykley Heads, combining new high quality office development set within an exceptional landscape, for use by residents, businesses, and visitors".

3.1 Aykley Heads is a long-standing and successful business and employment location and represents a strategically important component of the City's employment offer. Both the Council and the business community recognise that Durham City and the Aykley Heads site is the best location for office development in the County. The location and landscape quality of the Aykley Heads site is a unique asset and has the potential to attract new business and inward investment which will provide significant additional employment within the City.

3.2 We recognise that the key to achieving this will be to develop a high quality business park, incorporating new, modern and fit for purpose office accommodation and taking advantage of the attractive parkland setting, whilst enhancing its essential landscape quality and character. The transformation of the site is already underway as the planning application for the demolition of the Police HQ and development of a new purpose-built building and new housing has been approved. Work has also begun on the creation of a new public 'City Park'.

3.3 If developed successfully, Aykley Heads has the potential to become a flagship employment site in the North East Region, attracting world-leading businesses to the city which will drive the step-change envisaged for the economy of County Durham.

Objectives to Deliver the Vision

3.4 To achieve the vision for Aykley Heads the development should aim to meet the following strategic objectives:

- Deliver 70,000 sqm (750,000 sq ft) of new, high quality, flexible office floorspace to attract new national and international employers and accommodate approximately 6,000 jobs;
- Set new office development within a strong landscape framework which capitalises on the site's natural landscape features, provides integration with the surrounding landscape, captures and enhances wildlife potential and embraces environmental standards;
- Create a new gateway entrance, attractive networks for the movement of people and vehicles throughout the site, enhance public access and opportunities for sustainable travel to the City Centre and beyond via all modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling.
- Promote innovative approaches to sustainable design which reflect current best practice to ensure a sustainable development, together with appropriate supporting utilities and infrastructure.

3.5 Section 4.0 sets out a series of design principles and parameters to ensure that development achieves the strategic objectives and delivers the vision for Aykley Heads. These are illustrated through a set of accompanying design framework plans which should be used to inform development proposals for the site.

4 Masterplan Concepts, Principles and Parameters

4.1 This section sets out the Masterplan principles and parameters that are designed to guide comprehensive development at Aykley Heads.

4.2 The principles and parameters are set out under the following headings:

- Green Infrastructure Framework
- Movement Framework
- Development Framework
- Sustainable Design
- Concept Masterplan

Green Infrastructure Framework

4.3 Green infrastructure comprises strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations. New office developments will be set within a strong landscape framework which capitalises on the site's natural landscape features, provides integration with the surrounding landscape, captures and enhances wildlife potential, and embraces environmental standards.

4.4 Aykley Heads provides a unique opportunity in County Durham to create a high quality commercial development in an exceptional landscape setting with enhanced opportunities for public access and recreation. The principle elements of the landscape framework are set out below and illustrated in the Landscape Framework Plan recognising the already well established landscape framework this site enjoys.

Structural Landscaping

4.5 The existing landscape setting will provide visual integration of new office development incorporating a network of integrated green spaces which can be enjoyed by residents, the business community, and visitors.

Landscape Framework Plan



Key:

- - - Masterplan Area Boundary
- Proposed Landscaping
- Proposed Green Infrastructure
- Existing Landscape

- 1) Area with potential for relocation of sports pitches or open air events space.
- 2) New parkland with the DLI as its gateway extending to Newton Hall.
- 3) New structure planting to assimilate development in views from south and west.
- 4) Mature landscape infrastructure to be retained and enhanced.
- 5) Northern entrance to railway station and surroundings redesigned to make it more attractive to users - enhanced landscape setting to station
- 6) Memorial Garden incorporated within new development

Figure 5

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Durham City Park

4.6 The area of former agricultural land in the east of the site is currently underused and will provide a new city park with new planting and open space which will be enhanced and made available for public access and recreation. New structural planting will create a new parkland garden environment. Enhanced green routes running through the park will provide attractive and safe routes linking this area to the northern entrance of Durham Railway Station and Wharton Park and residential areas to the north of the site.

4.7 The city park provides an opportunity to incorporate a new open-air space for public events. This area also provides an opportunity for the relocation of the existing playing pitches at the site which will need to be re-provided before development can occur.

Strategic Landscaping

4.8 A strong landscape, comprising existing mature landscape features and new structural planting, will frame the six development areas (A to F) across the site (see Development Framework Plan).

4.9 Mature landscape features including important groups of trees and hedges throughout the site should be primarily retained and augmented, recognising that any losses incurred by providing access or accommodating building footprints will be mitigated and replaced elsewhere.

4.10 In particular, new structural landscaping will be required at development area C to screen new development in distance views from the south and south west and to help assimilate new development into the landscape.

4.11 Surface car parking should be integrated with planting to help minimise its visual impact also. Where new planting takes place native tree and plant species should be used.

4.12 Further consideration should be given to retaining the Memorial Garden and integrating it with new development in development area A or facilitating relocation.

Movement Framework

Movement Framework

4.13 The redevelopment of Aykley Heads will lead to the creation of a new gateway entrance, attractive networks for the movement of people and vehicles throughout the site, enhanced public access and opportunities for sustainable travel to the City Centre and beyond via all modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling. The principal elements of the movement framework that should be incorporated into detailed design proposals are set out below and illustrated in the Movement Framework Plan.

Movement Framework Plan



Key:

- - - Masterplan Area Boundary
- Main Vehicular Routes
- ↔ Access from Main Vehicular Routes
- Existing Footpaths
- ↔ Vehicular Gateways into Site
- Sustrans Route
- Potential New Footpath Link

- 1) New access road to provide direct link to development cell C
- 2) Network of paths and trails to be retained and enhanced
- 3) Improved cycleway link to station /pedestrian link to DJI and park
- 4) Improved pedestrian links to Aykley Heads, Wharton Park, the DJI and the City
- 5) Links between Wharton Park and Aykley Heads to be improved
- 6) Left turn only access to development area A

Figure 6

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- The main vehicle entrance to the Aykley Heads site will be from the roundabout at the junction with the B1635. This gateway will provide access to Development Area A and direct link to Development Area C;
- A secondary vehicle entrance from the B1635 (left turn only) will provide a further access to Development Area A;
- Development areas B, E and F will be accessed via road links from the Dryburn Road roundabout at the northern end;
- Access to the rear of the Railway Station and the Durham Light Infantry will be from the existing access on the B1635.

Public Transport, Walking and Cycling Provision

4.18 Development of this site will need to be accompanied by a Travel Plan to ensure appropriate provisions for sustainable access and maximising connectivity with existing routes. Employees and other visitors to the site will be encouraged to travel by public transport, bicycle or by walking as an alternative to the car. To facilitate this, development should enhance connectivity to Durham Railway station by providing safe and legible pedestrian and cycle links.

Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

4.19 The Masterplan should incorporate a network of pedestrian and cycle links throughout the site. These should reflect established pathways and desire lines where possible and ensure links with the Railway Station and the wider walking and cycling network.

Parking

4.20 Development proposals will need to provide appropriate parking in accordance with the Council's adopted standards:

- 1 car parking space per 35 sqm for public sector buildings;
- 1 car parking space per 30 sqm for private sector buildings.

4.21 Appropriate provision for secure bicycle parking and storage should be made which accords with the Council's minimum standards.

Development Framework

Development Framework

4.22 New developments at Aykley Heads will deliver 70,000 sq m (750,000 sq ft) of new, high quality, flexible office floorspace to attract new national and international employers and accommodate approximately 6,000 jobs across 6 development areas.

Development Framework Plan



Key:

- - - Masterplan Area Boundary
- Existing Development Areas
- Proposed Development Areas

Figure 7

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Development Areas

4.23 The majority of the development areas are previously developed or occupied by existing buildings which will be demolished, or substantially reconfigured, to make way for more modern, fit for purpose office accommodation. The anticipated nature and scale of development on each Development Area is set out below and on the Indicative Storey Heights Plan.

4.24 At the current time, approximately two thirds of new office development is proposed to be occupied by the private sector with the remaining third provided for public sector use.

Development Area A



Picture 2

can be developed. Local topography enables development on this part of the site to be up to 6 storeys in height. The building could be sited at the foot of the embankment (as illustrated) although it may be appropriate for the building line to be brought forward thereby allowing direct access from the building onto the green space frontage with car parking located to the rear.

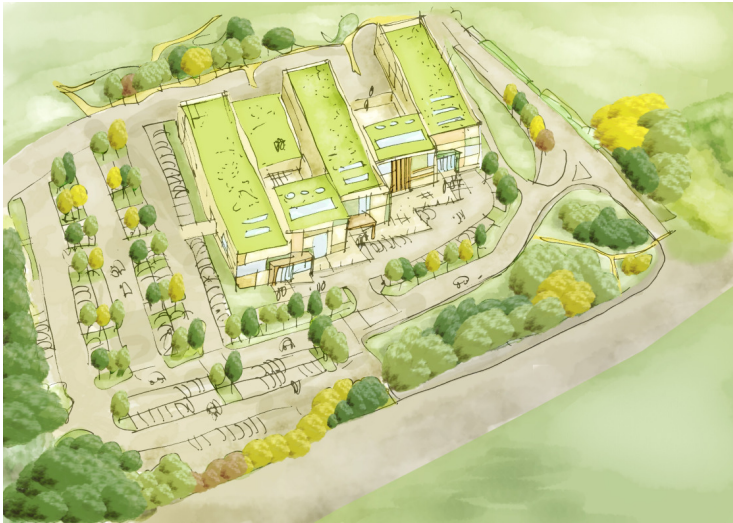
4.28 New development across Development Area A should provide a strong visual frontage and legible gateway to the site. The siting and design of buildings on the northern and southern areas of Area A and on Development Area B should respect one another and present a coherent visual dialogue in views along the B1635.

4.25 Development Area A is approximately 4.2ha in area. This site will provide around 21,379 sqm (230,000 sq ft) of new employment floorspace.

4.26 New development of 4 to 5 storeys would be appropriate on the southern part of the site. It is envisaged that this area would be an appropriate location for public services given its prominent position at the site entrance and accessibility to public transport.

4.27 The northern part of this site is currently occupied by County Hall which will require demolition before this area

Development Area B



Picture 3

4.29 Development Area B is approximately 1.9 ha in area. This site will provide around 9,290 sq m (100,000 sq ft) of new employment floorspace.

4.30 Development on this area may be up to 5 storeys in height. The siting and design of the building should respect those on development area A and provide strong visual frontage in views along the B6135.

Development Area C



Picture 4

4.31 Development Area C is approximately 4.2ha in area. This site will provide around 19,775 sq m (212,800 sq ft) of new employment floorspace.

4.32 It is envisaged that this site will accommodate one or two large 'anchor' companies who require business premises in a high quality setting.

4.33 Development on this site should respond appropriately to its location on the ridge line and visibility in distance views. In particular any planning application will need to demonstrate that proposed development responds

appropriately to its setting particularly in respect of its relationship with the Cathedral and World Heritage Site in key views. In this regard.

- The design of any building(s) and, in particular, its southern elevation(s) should respect distance views of Durham Cathedral in key views from the south and southwest.
- In particular the design should avoid strong horizontal rooflines to retain the visual integrity of the Cathedral tower and its parapets and should not compromise their legibility.
- It would be acceptable for the building(s) to be visible and have a presence in views from the A690.

- Design should be innovative and of the very highest architectural quality consistent with this high-profile location and landscape setting.
- Design should enable occupants to take full advantage of views of the surrounding landscape to the east.

Development Area D:

4.34 This area has the potential to provide an important southern gateway to the Aykley Heads site linking to Durham Railway Station. Development of up to 3 storeys in height would be appropriate at this site.

4.35 The Council will encourage development proposals that would help create a functional and legible gateway to the Aykley Heads site and attractive pedestrian links between to the railway station. The site has an allocation for employment use in the City of Durham Local Plan however the Council will also consider other uses where it can be demonstrated that these are suitable and appropriate to this new entrance gateway location.

Development Area E:



4.36 Development Area E is approximately 1.5 ha in area. This site will provide around 9,450 sq m (100,500 sq ft) of new employment floorspace.

4.37 This site is currently occupied by tennis courts, which are no longer in use, and a bowling green.

Picture 5

Development Area F:



Picture 6

4.38 Development Area F is approximately 0.64 ha in area. This site will provide around 3,300 sq m (35,500 sq ft) of new employment floorspace.

4.39 This site is currently occupied by Durham Trinity School. Development of this plot will only occur if alternative provision is made for the relocation of the School. Development will, therefore, be phased such that suitable alternative education provision can be made before the site is released.

Phasing

4.40 We recognise that a phased approach to development will be required. It is envisaged that the relocation of public sector services from County Hall will initiate the first phase of development namely, new development on the southern part of Area A followed by the demolition of County Hall and redevelopment of the northern area.

4.41 This first phase of development at Area A should facilitate the delivery of the new access road to Development Area C, thereby opening up and enabling the development of this site early in the plan period.

4.42 Transitional car parking arrangements should be considered for each development phase and an appropriate strategy submitted as part of future planning application(s).

Flexibility

4.43 Buildings should be of a flexible specification to allow the use to respond to changing circumstances and to facilitate co-location of services as needs arise. This could be achieved through shared atriums and reception facilities through to vertical and horizontal splitting of the buildings.

Supporting Facilities

4.44 To ensure the commercial success of the Aykley Heads site, ancillary supporting facilities will need to be provided. Such services could include, but need not be restricted to the following:

- Uses in the A1, A2, A3 and A4 use classes (convenience retail, sandwich bar, dry cleaners, restaurant, snack bar, café);

- C1 use class (hotel);
- D1, D2 use classes (health facilities, crèches, gym).

4.45 These should be sited in an accessible and commercially viable location. Initial consultation feedback indicates that the vacant site adjacent to the north of Development Area C may provide a suitable location. An alternative would be to the immediate north of the main entrance to the site from the B6135.

Sustainable Design

Sustainable Design

4.53 The Council will promote innovative approaches to sustainable design which reflect best practice to ensure a sustainable development supported by appropriate supporting utilities and infrastructure. The development should incorporate measures to minimise CO2 emissions through a combination of building performance improvements and on-site renewable energy technologies.

Building Design Standards

4.46 The design of buildings should reflect prevailing national quality standards and Building Regulations at the time of the submission of any detailed planning application.

4.47 It will be important for the design and appearance of new buildings to be appropriate to the parkland environment. Units should be constructed of high quality materials which respect and complement its immediate landscape setting. The use of natural materials on building facades, such as timber cladding, may assist in this regard although the use of other materials may also be appropriate. Consideration could also be given to opportunities to enhance the sustainability of buildings through innovative design approaches such as green or living walls and green roofs.

4.48 The Council will encourage private sector development proposals to achieve a rating of at least “Very Good” when measured against the respective BREEAM ^(a) building category.

Renewable Energy

4.49 The Council will encourage the incorporation of renewable energy technologies. The feasibility of using a mix of one or more types of renewables, including the following, should be considered:

- District Heating System
- Solar Thermal
- Photovoltaic (PV)
- Combined heat and power (CHP)
- Biomass
- Ground source heat pump

a Building Research establishment Environmental Assessment Method

Drainage

4.50 As the site is not at risk of flooding, surface drainage should be the subject of a Flood Risk Assessment to determine the impact of run-off from rainfall and how this needs to be managed, particularly in respect of the potential impact of discharges into local watercourses. Drainage infrastructure should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). This will form an integral part of the landscape infrastructure/green landscape network within the site. The types of SUDS used should be appropriate to the site having regard to soil and drainage conditions. The detailed masterplan should identify the proposed location of SUDS and indicate the form that they should take.

Utilities

4.51 Each Development Area should be adequately serviced by utilities including gas, electricity and water supplies. The developer should consult with utilities providers to ensure that there is sufficient capacity available such that each development phase is capable of being appropriately serviced. Future planning applications should demonstrate how it is proposed to connect to the utilities network and that there is sufficient capacity available.

Concept Masterplan

Concept Masterplan



Key:

--- Masterplan Area Boundary

Figure 8

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4.52 The vision for Aykley Heads is embodied in the Concept Masterplan which combines the movement, development and green infrastructure frameworks to provide an early design response to the site context and known development constraints. The Concept Masterplan represents an early design response to the site context and known development constraints (Section 2.0). This and the visuals, illustrate how development at the site could come forward.



Picture 7 View from East



Picture 8 View from West

4.53 Although illustrative, the information informing the Concept Masterplan ensures that it represents a deliverable design response. It is therefore intended that the Concept Masterplan is used to guide proposals for the site at the outline stage.

4.54 The Council will expect that development proposals at the application stage will be in broad accordance with the design framework principles and parameters which are set out in this SPD and the relevant development management policies of the Local Plan.

5 Delivery

Pre-Application Consultation Strategy

5.1 Pre-application advice should be sought before any planning application is submitted. In addition to the consultation undertaken in respect of this SPD, the following bodies will be consulted prior to the submission of any planning application(s):

- Local Councillors (Nevilles Cross Ward);
- Local Parish Councils (Framwellgate Parish);
- Highway Authority (Durham County Council);
- Highway Agency;
- Environment Agency;
- Natural England;
- County Durham Economic Partnership;
- County Durham Environment Partnership;
- Safe Durham Partnership; and
- Any other relevant Statutory Undertakers.

5.2 Pre-application consultation should be carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in our Statement of Community Involvement (May 2010). The scope of such consultation should be agreed beforehand.

Scope of Future Planning Applications

5.3 Prior to implementation of the County Durham Plan the County Council intends to adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy contribution scheme. It is anticipated that the Aykley Heads development would be charged at the same rate as other qualifying developments in Durham City although the details of this process are subject to change. It is possible that a Section 106 agreement will be required in addition to CIL but this would only be related to on-site works or off-site works which are required to make the development happen (such as highways). The S106 should not duplicate the provision of resources for community infrastructure contained in CIL.

5.4 Any future planning application(s) should be submitted in accordance with national requirements and the information set out in our Validation Checklist.

5.5 In addition to standard national requirements which consist of a completed planning application form, location plan, other plans and elevations where appropriate, and a Design and Access Statement, any planning submission will need to be accompanied by a number of specialist reports. The type of information and level of detail required will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the application but will likely include:

- Summary Statement;
- Planning Statement;

- Economic/Viability Statement;
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plan;
- Energy and Sustainability Statement;
- Ground Conditions Report (including Coal Mining Risk Assessment);
- Landscape Assessment and Strategy;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Topographical Survey;
- Biodiversity Survey and Report;
- Flood Risk Assessment (for sites over 1ha in size);
- Lighting Assessment; and
- Archaeological Assessment.

5.6 The scope of any planning application submission should be discussed and agreed at an early stage.

Environmental Impact Assessment

5.7 Following agreement on the scope of any outline application(s), it is recommended that a Screening Opinion is obtained from the Council to confirm whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required. This should be accompanied by a Scoping request to determine the scope of the EIA.

5.8 Any screening request submitted, should as a minimum, be accompanied by a plan to identify the site, a description of the nature of development, consideration of potential environmental effects, and any other information deemed necessary to assist in the determination of the screening opinion.

To find out more about the County Durham Plan contact:

Write to: Spatial Policy Team
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UQ

Telephone: 03000 261 908

Email: spatialpolicy@durham.gov.uk

Website: www.durham.gov.uk/cdp

Interactive Website: <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning>

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