



Middleton St George Parish Council

www.middleton-st-george.org.uk

msgclerk@aol.com

Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

What is neighbourhood planning?

- Since 2011 the Government has allowed communities to produce neighbourhood plans for their local area;
- The process of preparing a neighbourhood plan enables people living and working in an area to guide where and how future development happens;
- Plans are prepared by the local community, through the parish council rather than being prepared by Darlington Borough Council;
- Plans can help deliver types of development the local people would like to see in their community;
- The plan will be used to make decisions on planning applications, giving it genuine influence on the future of Middleton St George.
- Neighbourhood plans can include a range of planning policies, including those which: guide new housing development; conserve and enhance the environment; and support the provision of community facilities;
- They are a powerful tool to ensure the community gets the right types of development in the right place;
- Plans can include community actions, which will be delivered alongside other organisations working with the parish council.

What will the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan do?

- Set out a local spatial vision for an area and define objectives for the plan to show how the vision will be achieved;
- Provides local land-use policies to guide development;
- Can allocate land for development and/ or protection.

What issues can a neighbourhood plan cover?

- Neighbourhood planning can cover any matter important to the local community such as:
 - Natural environment (open spaces)
 - Built environment (design)
 - Housing (where, what type, what it looks like)
 - Transport (cycle routes)
- These are 'development' plans and so are meant to help deliver development that the community supports.

What can't a neighbourhood plan do?

- Neighbourhood plans are specifically about local planning policies – only policies in the plan can be used to make planning decisions;
- It can't prevent development already agreed through adopted higher level plans (Darlington Core Strategy/ Local Plan) and must be generally in conformity with these plans;
- Can't cover strategic planning matters – i.e. major infrastructure, minerals and waste;
- Only one plan in each neighbourhood area and it must last for a reasonable period of time.



Middleton St George Parish Council

www.middleton-st-george.org.uk

msgclerk@aol.com

What is this current consultation about?

- The first stage of preparing a neighbourhood plan is getting the area of the plan agreed by Darlington Borough Council;
- Middleton St George Parish Council has applied for an area to be designated and Darlington Borough Council are required to ask for comments on the proposed area;
- The application had to be made to reflect the boundary changes which came about via the community governance review in 2016.

Why does the proposed plan area not cover the whole of the Parish?

- The proposed neighbourhood plan area excludes the land owned by Durham Tees Valley Airport. The airport is of strategic importance as it is of sub regional importance to the Tees Valley's economy. Strategic matters cannot be addressed through neighbourhood plans and correctly, planning policies relevant to the airport will be included within the new Darlington Local Plan.

I provided comments on the neighbourhood plan previously before the parish council boundary was changed, what has happened to these comments?

- The engagement and evidence work that was undertaken before the creation of the new Middleton St George Parish Council will be used to inform the preparation of the new plan.

What is the relationship with the emerging Darlington Local Plan?

- Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Darlington Local Plan/ Core Strategy;
- A draft neighbourhood plan is not tested against the policies in an emerging local plan, however, it is still a relevant consideration when preparing the neighbourhood plan, so it can't be ignored.

How can we get involved?

- You can respond to the current consultation on the proposed area for the plan to cover which is being undertaken by Darlington Borough Council, details of the consultation are available online <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-and-environmental-policy/neighbourhood-planning#mid> **responses must be received by 29 March 2019;**
- If the area is designated, the parish council will organise some early engagement activities to obtain the views of the local community on the scope of the neighbourhood plan;
- If you would like to be notified of progress with the neighbourhood plan, please contact the parish council msgclerk@aol.com;